

EVOLVING THROUGH DESIGN

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COMPLICIT

EVOLVING THROUGH DESIGN

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EDITORIAL LETTER BY

SAVANNAH SOULE
RUSSELL PINKSTON

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FORWARD

DEAN MARK ELISON HOVERSTEN

If one lives long enough, the adage that there is nothing new under the sun makes a certain amount of sense. And yet... the act of design always requires a fresh look. It requires a deep and empathetic look, the connection of disparate points of reference, and the exploration of ideas in new arrangements. Design is, indeed, a verb. In these pages, designers much younger than me explore design with a fresh look. I hope you enjoy reading. ✧

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

SAVANNAH SOULE AND RUSSELL PINKSTON

Poggenpohl, Sharon Helmer.
"Time for Change: Building
a Design Discipline."
University of Chicago
Press. 1 Sept. 2009.

—**DESIGN** is often thought of as the act of creation— the creation of something either new or re-imagined. But design must, at times, necessitate destruction. The true meaning of design is something closer to the act of planning, the organization and implementation of better futures, despite the status quo that might serve to hinder progress.

—**SYSTEMS** are pervasive in design, acting both inside and outside of the practice. These systems can be elusive and cryptic, both difficult to identify and impossible to avoid: sociopolitical systems quietly shape our realities and regulate our daily lives; artificial materials breed dishonesty; and wasteful design pollutes our world. The discipline of design, itself, is influenced by ritualistic precedents set by outdated movements like Modernism, the Bauhaus, or the École des Beaux-Arts. At the same time, the practice of design is becoming overly focused on technological advancement at the peril of creativity.

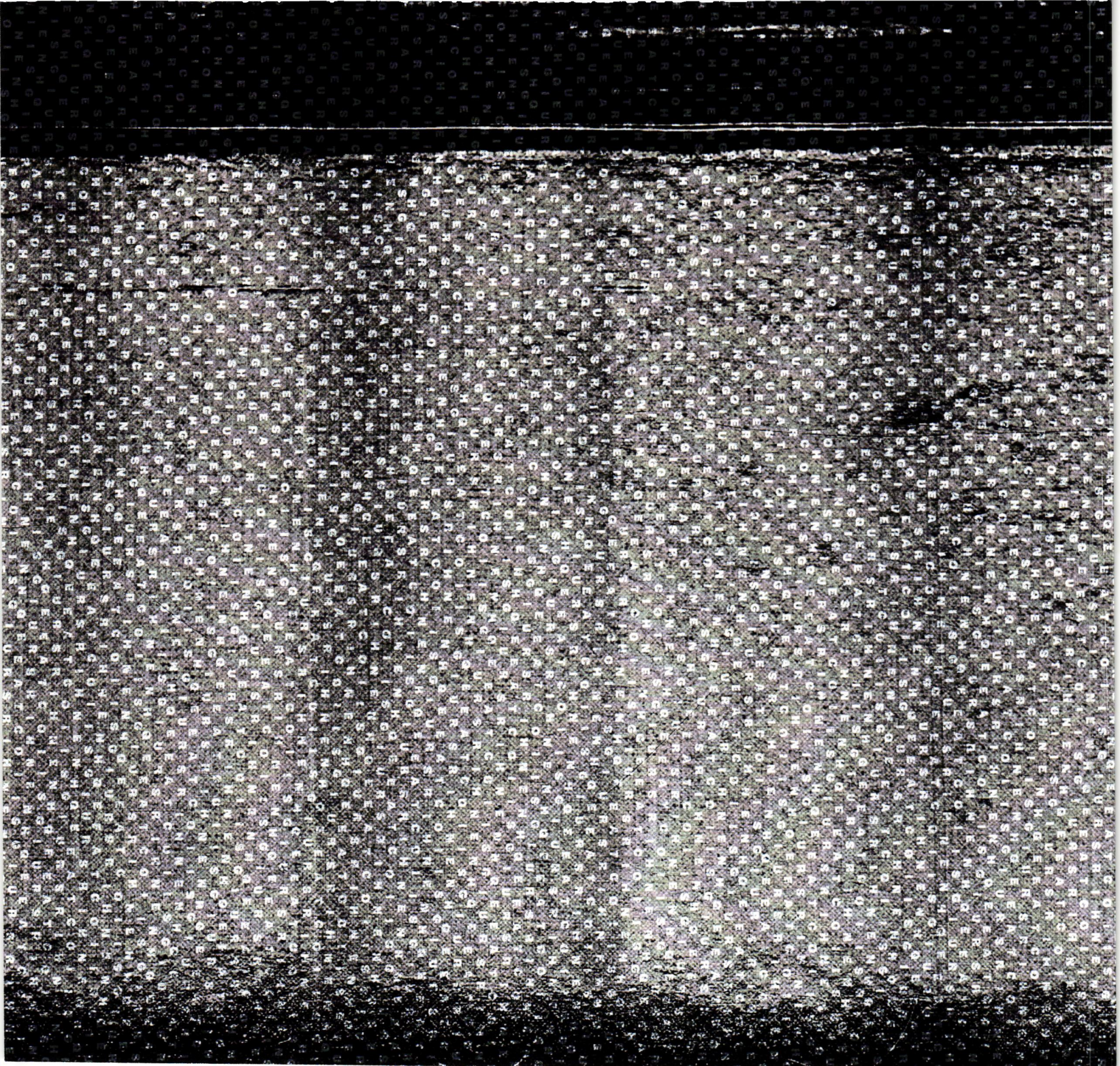
Once these systems are in place, they can seem to be immutable, but the beauty of design is that it is iterative and progressive and must, by its nature, challenge the status quo.

"Transformations from a status quo do not happen suddenly, and do not evolve because one or a few people believe it is necessary, but because the idea of change resonates with many individuals and institutions worldwide, especially those who practice a new version of design and who teach the next generation of designers to build on the past rather than replicate it" (Poggenpohl 2009).

Seminal movements like Modernism were successful because they were necessary reactions to their particular place and time. These were planned movements that arose from the zeitgeist as designers challenged the systems which required change. Designers like László Moholy-Nagy or Le Corbusier were reacting to previous systems, creating or encouraging rebellion against them, but the movements they engendered were themselves necessarily impermanent.

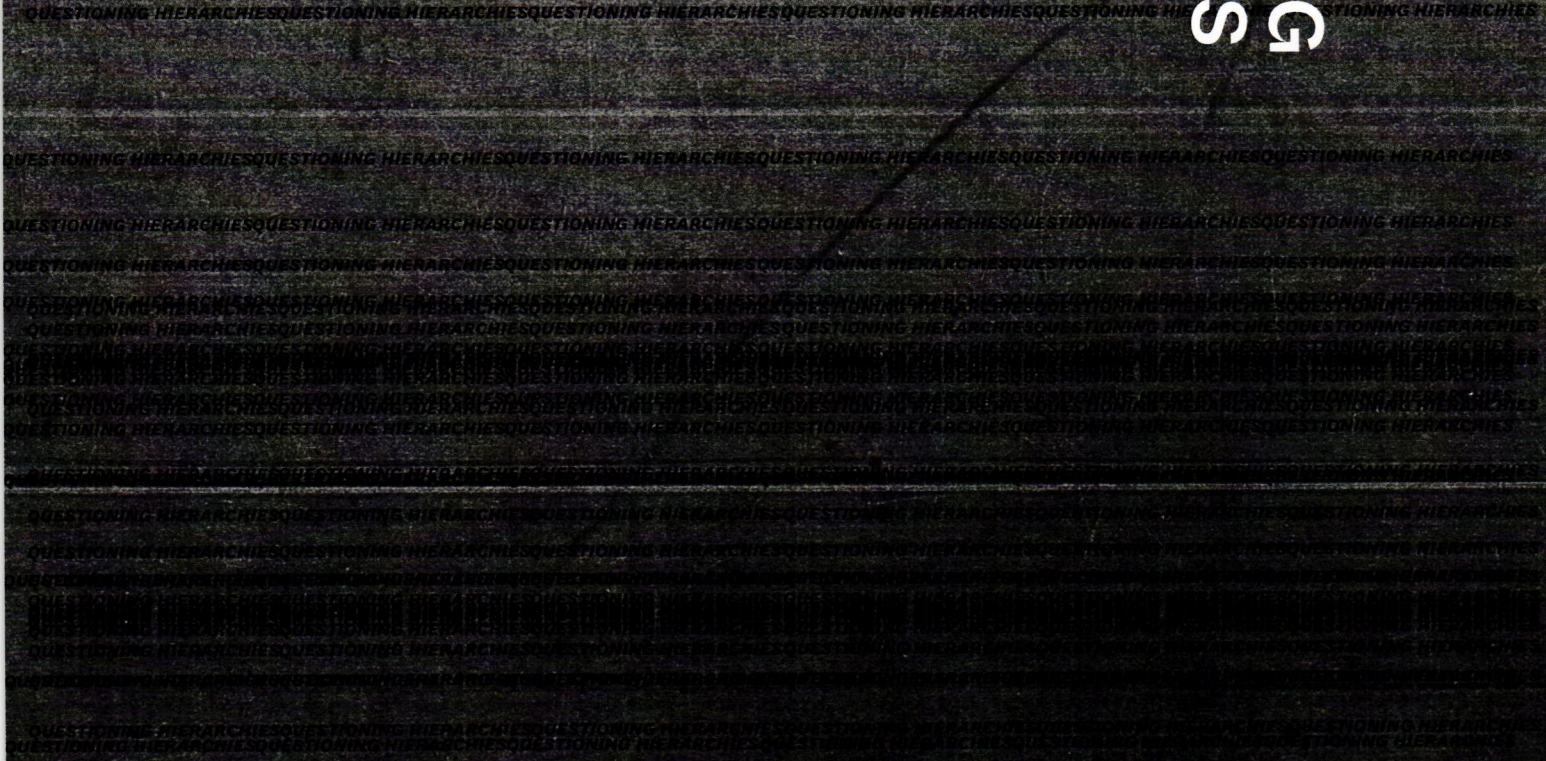
—**REBELLION** can be an act or a state of mind. It can be personal or collective. Rebellions are the intentionally-designed products of organic reactions against obsolete practices. Eventually, a chain of these reactions cascades into new systems. Historically, this cascade has been slow-moving, but today's response rate is an avalanche of reformation. As designers, it is increasingly important to understand the systems under which we operate and our roles within these systems.

Design has long been charged with imagining a more desirable future, of being in the vanguard of new, creative frontiers, and designers are elemental in affecting this change. It is our role to question, to identify problems, and to design better solutions. But what happens when it becomes no longer possible to create a more-desirable future within the confines of our current systems? Does this call for rebellion? ✎





QUESTIONING HIERARCHIES



I have always understood that **"BEAUTY IS IN THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER"** but never quite considered the implications that this has on our society. Jean DuBuffet states that, "No one doubts for an instant that beauty exists, but you'll never find two people who agree on which objects are beautiful" (DuBuffet 13). So, while beauty-as a concept-is a universal truth, that which is considered beautiful is not. This idea that beauty is relative-yet greatly valuable-is more prevalent in our society than we realize. Those with privilege decide what is beautiful, and this affects how everyone else must perceive it. This perpetuates the "us versus them" mentality that seems to have a hold on everyone, and it is only when "the other" (aka the non-privileged) members of society conform to what "the accepted" deem beautiful that they are then accepted themselves.

This is starting to change, though. With the rise of the internet-and a plethora of other communication technologies-people from disparate social groups have greater means of connecting with each other.

The internet is causing a paradigm shift in our society, serving as a medium of discourse between "the accepted" and "the other." Those without privilege are starting to make their voices heard, and those with privilege now have an opportunity to listen. This goes hand-in-hand with what Richard and Susan Roth call "cognitive decolonization," or "dismantling hierarchies, relinquishing privilege, and standing in opposition to the forces of exclusion" (Roth 6). They claim that this is the ethical task of the art world, **but what is art if not self-expression through a medium? Is that not what the internet is allowing society to do?**

Marginalized groups are fighting to gain privileges that the dominant group has, and this has been made possible through art and design. In my opinion, true beauty is born of collaboration. When people use their differences as a way to connect, achievement flourishes. And, while we still have a long way to go, it seems as though society is starting to take that approach.

As a wealthy, white child growing up in Hong Kong, I personally benefited from the immense privileges I was afforded—despite being a minority in that city. This further proves the point that modernism favors hierarchies, and those hierarchies, though defined by western ideals, are still experienced worldwide. The decolonization of Hong Kong, though, is what led to my childhood being a synthesis of modernism and postmodernism. In “The Postmodern Condition,” Jean-Francois Lyotard describes postmodernism as an accumulation of different cultures (Lyotard). In this situation, my parents learned as much from us as I did from them, which dismantled the familial hierarchy that modernism enforces. My parents allowed me to question their choices and ideals, which not only gave me the gift of having an open mind, but also taught me that there are no universal values (McEvilley 24).

While technology changes, it always exists to serve as many people as possible. Dr. Sharon Joines, professor at the NCSU College of Design, claims it is more of a thought process than anything. In terms of global design, Joines is a firm believer that the East far outpaces the West. She feels as though it’s hard for us to admit that we’re lagging as a society and that it

is exactly this mindset that holds us back from progress. I see this as a reflection on the College of Design as well: The college is known for its studio majors and caters mostly to them, yet research is such an integral part of design that it makes no sense to exclude those students of Design Studies from the picture. Research is the one thing that everyone in the college should be doing. There needs to be a more collaborative effort between makers and thinkers. It is difficult, however, for anyone to admit that they might not be doing something in the best way, and—in my experience—designers and artists can get stuck in their own heads.

When asked what he would teach if given the opportunity, Milton Glaser answered that **“A designer’s role is one in which we have to be at least conscious of the consequences of what we transmit to others.” (Glaser).**

In other words, we have to be conscious of the cause and effect of our designs and our actions. External influences shape our minds, which shape our designs. When people view those designs, some type of information is transmitted, even if it’s only on a subconscious level. I have always gotten the notion that, when Americans talk about people from other countries, they don’t

see them in the same way as they see other Americans. It's all present in the language, and American storytellers use this to their advantage; they use America's love of competition and alienation from the rest of the world to invoke certain feelings about current events—most often involving war.

We want to be the best. We want to beat them. We need to help the others. They need our help.

All this rhetoric of swooping in to defend the forces of good against evil sounds all too much like the “white man’s burden,” how colonization is seen as “helping” countries that aren’t up to Western standards. In this era of information, propaganda looks very

**“...WE HAVE TO
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Clark, Hazel, and David Brody. *Design Studies a Reader*. Bloomsbury, London, 2016.

Roth, Richard and Susan. *Beauty is Nowhere: Ethical Issues in Art and Design*. G & B Arts International, 1998, p.6.

Dubuffet, Jean, et al. *Beauty Is Nowhere: Ethical Issues in Art and Design*. G & B Arts International, 1998.

McEvilley, Thomas. *Beauty Is Nowhere: Ethical Issues in Art and Design*. G & B Arts International, 1998.p.26.

House, Neely, et al. *Fully Awake: Black Mountain College*. Documentary Educational Resources, 2008.

different than it did during World Wars I and II. Propaganda has evolved with the technology and the mindsets of the age. Nowadays, war broadcasting on news networks is treated like entertainment. It's almost like a sport: our team versus their team, and you're not a real fan if you don't support the game.

Not enough people question the politics and religion their parents teach them at a young age. As a result, they never learn to question other things. They accept anything they hear on the news, see on social media, maybe even hear from a friend (who shares their views). There is too much accepting and not enough questioning. People rely too much on tradition, and that is what keeps us stuck in the past. There's no way to make progress if we keep doing the same things.

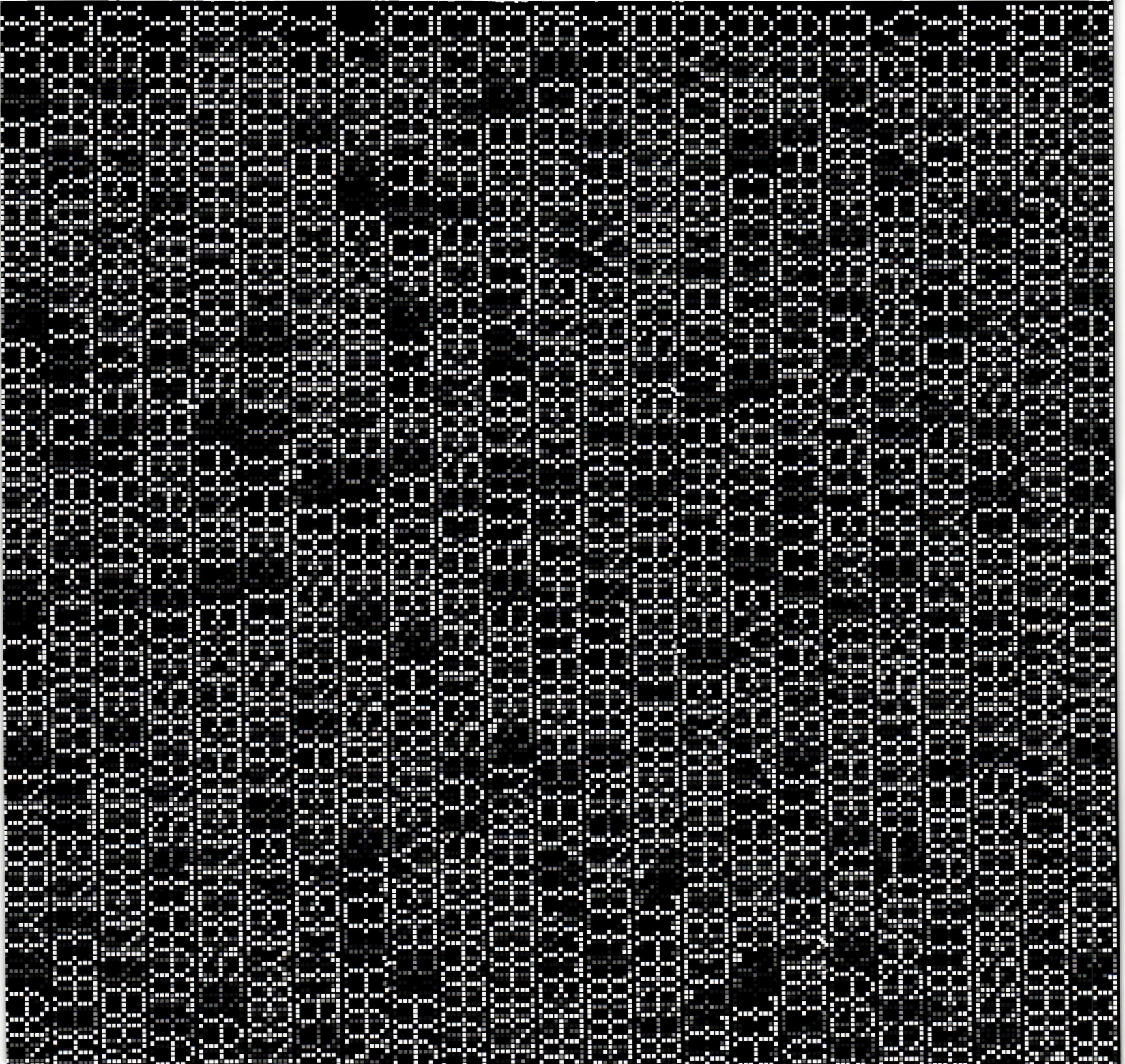
A major part of questioning is to gain understanding. That is why it is important to hear the other side of the argument. It is important to notice and be proud of our differences but not to the point where we completely alienate ourselves. The school systems in America need to do a better job of teaching the history of our country in an unbiased way. White history is the standard, but white people aren't the only people who live in America (though many seem to believe this).

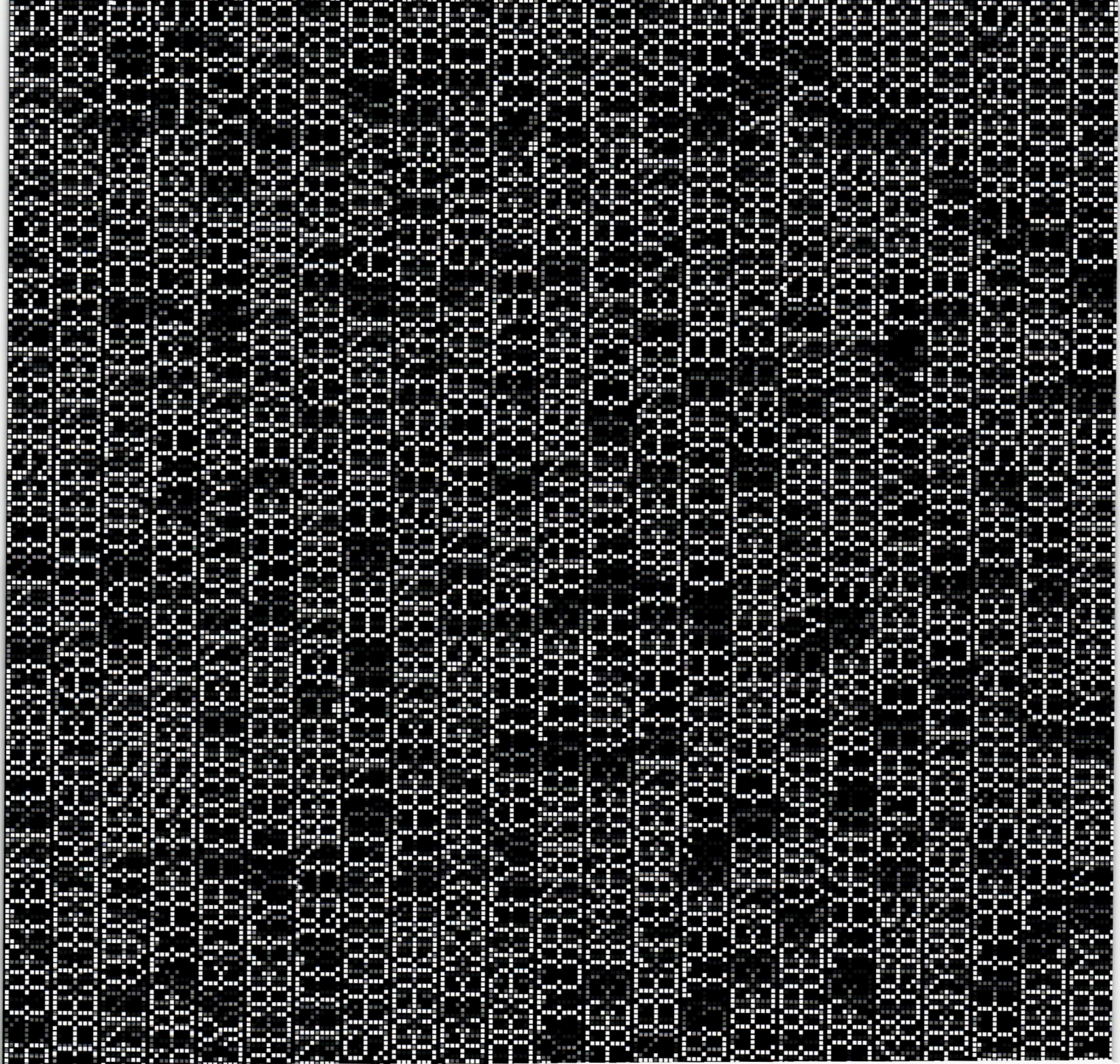
While our world is full of hierarchy and suppression, I also see it shifting to a more collaborative society. Advances in communication technologies are allowing people to see and learn from new perspectives, but only if they make sure to keep an open mind. Collaboration can't happen without an open mind, and I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to question. Hierarchies exist on all scales, and I think that, if we recognize this as a society, we can eventually dismantle the social hierarchies that dominate our everyday lives. ✂

Martin Pedersen. An Interview with Milton Glaser. *Metropolis Magazine*, 2003.

Lyotard, Jean-Francois. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. University Press, 1997.

"War Made Easy: How Presidents & Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death (2007)" *IMDb*, [IMDb](http://IMDb.com), www.imdb.com/title/tt1015246/.

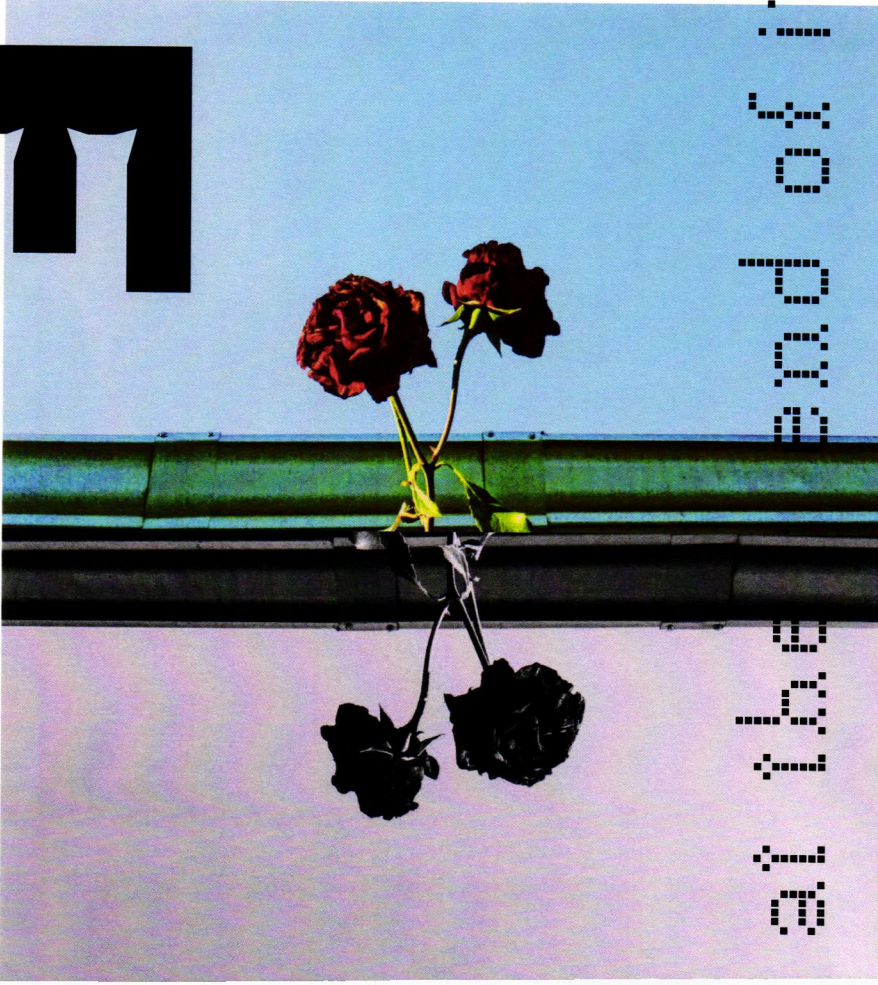






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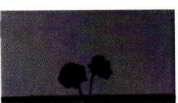
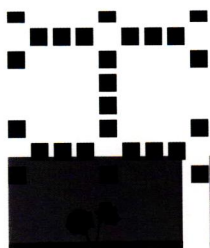
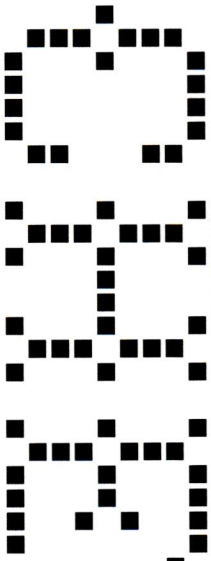
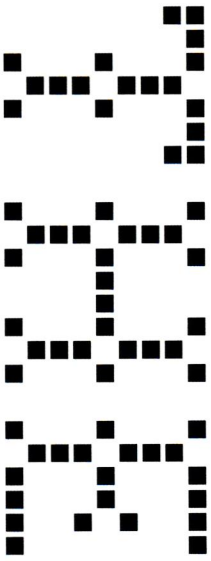
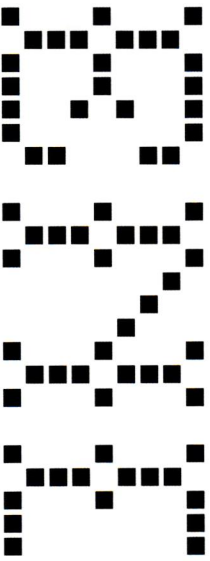
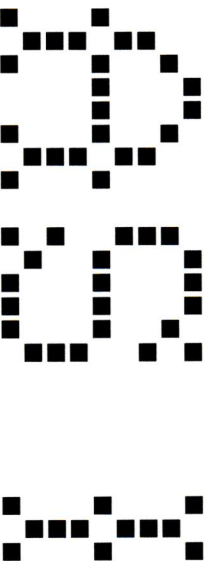
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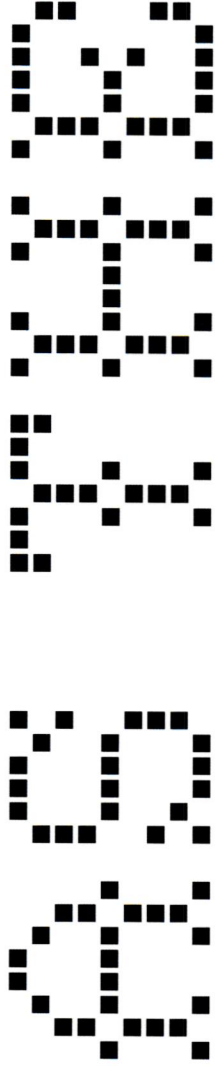
FLOWERS ARE A STRONG IMAGE THAT IS OFTEN USED IN DESIGN ELEMENTS.

Roses are known in many cultures to be delicate and refined; however, there comes a certain sadness when witnessing a wilting rose. It is the death of something beautiful, as if the essence of the flower—it's very reason for existing—was solely for our enjoyment.

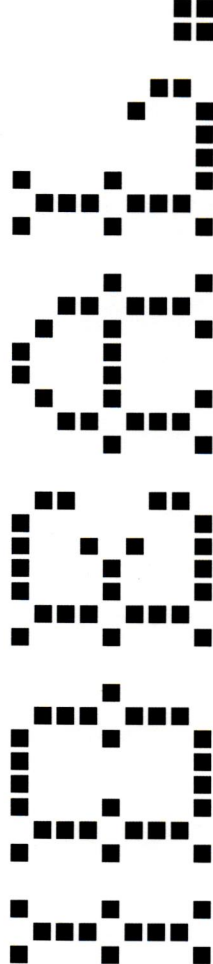
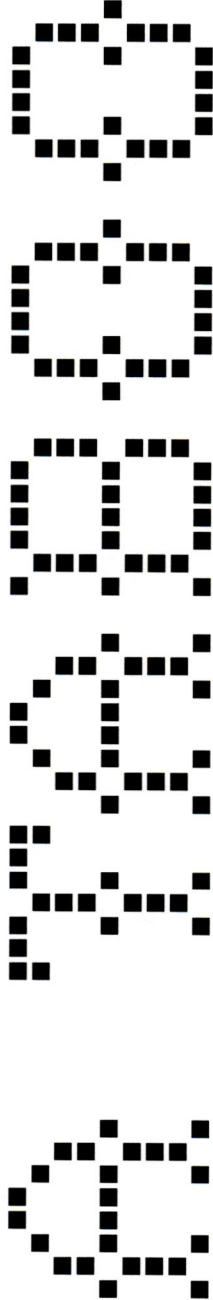
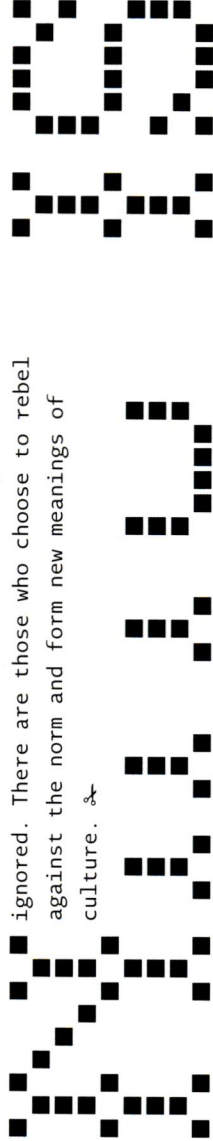
The cycle of life is a system where we, as a society, cherish the beginning and are reluctant to face the end when it is near. Endings are natural and occur with everything. They should not be hidden away or avoided but, rather, embraced. **To cherish the endings as much as the beginnings is a taboo ideal.**

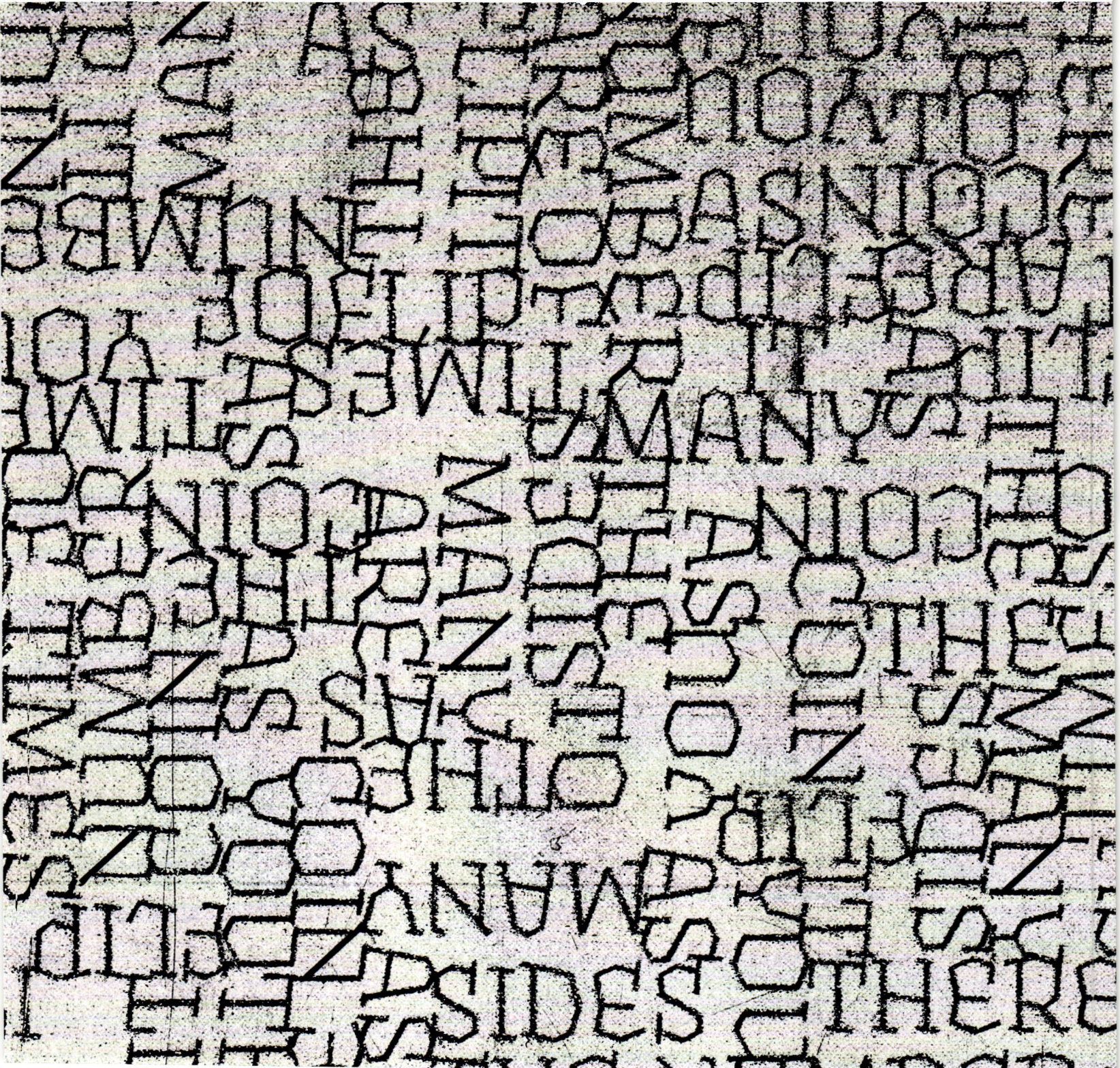
This image exemplifies a natural stage of this revered icon that is not ideal: beauty at the end of its life. This is challenged further by literally turning the tarnished epitome of beauty on its side. Mirroring the image with two contrasting color schemes creates a separation between the life and eventual death of the rose. However, having the "death" occur before the "life" exhibits the desire to have the end cherished as equally as the beginning.

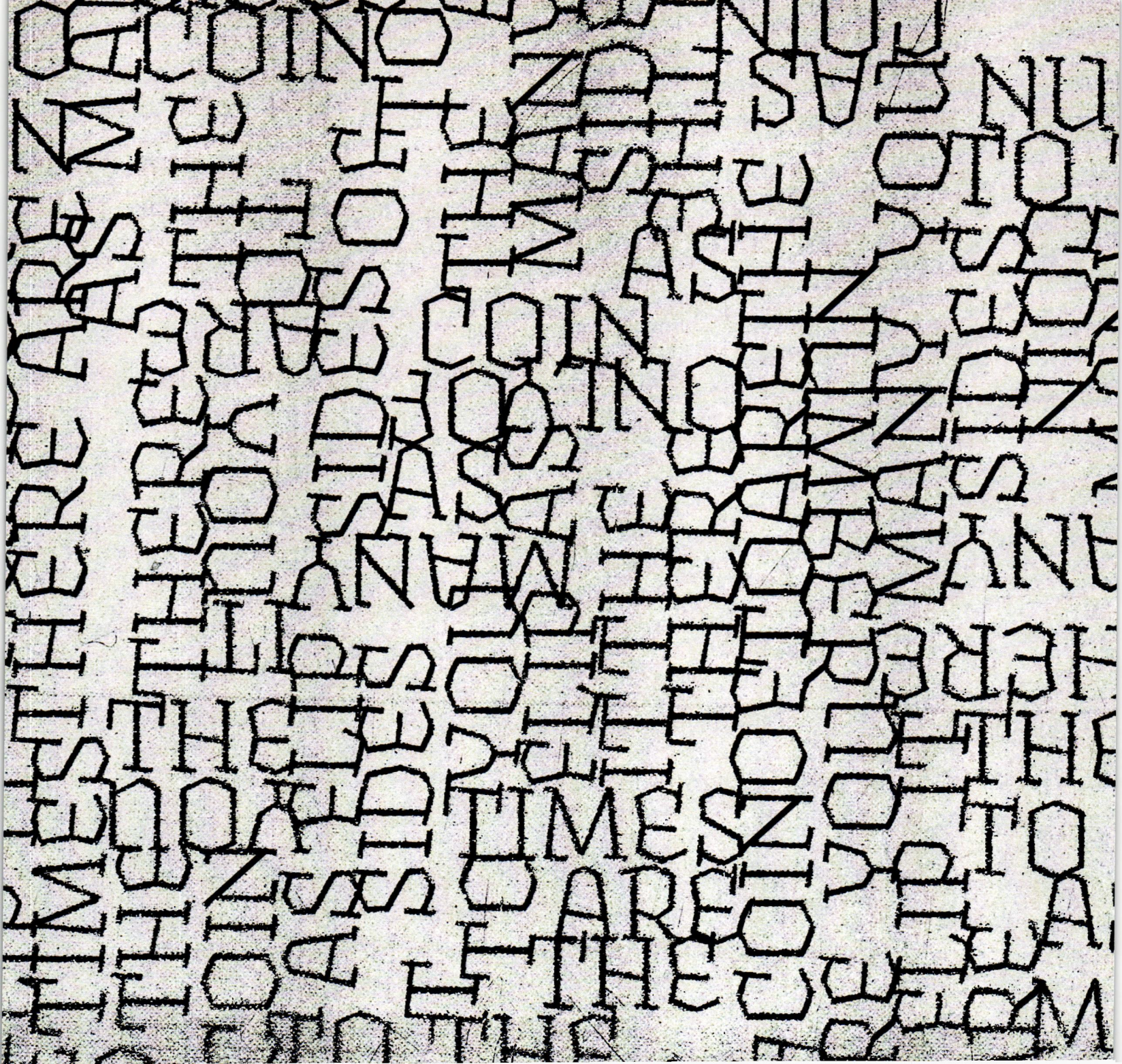




■ Design reflects culture. What is valued in society is mirrored in the design elements of that time. Surroundings are inspirations, and experiences are muses for creativity. ■ There are those who create designs that are reminiscent of culture but show us elements that are hidden beneath the surface of society—ideals that want to be forgotten or ignored. There are those who choose to rebel against the norm and form new meanings of culture. &







**There are many sides
to the coin
as the
number of
times**

EXPLORING HONESTY
AND INTENT IN DESIGN:

**you FLIP
it.**

DESIGN IS A TERM THAT CAN BE ASSOCIATED

WITH ALMOST EVERY HUMAN ENDEAVOR, whether planned or unplanned, whether conscious or not (Keinonen). Fortunately, we have more specific terms that we can apply to different activities; otherwise, we might end up using the term “design” way too often:

“Would you be so kind as to design the movement of your hand to pass me some salt?”

“My grandma’s apple pie recipe was SO well designed.”

Sigh all you want, but you get the idea. We design our lives, and—whether directly or indirectly—our actions impose design on others. Honesty and intent are integral to every action we take. So, it makes sense to try to understand what honesty and intent mean in design, especially for design professionals. Honesty and intent can seem like two sides of a coin; however, these ideas can lead to many different understandings as we keep flipping the coin to examine the outcome.

A quick Google search for synonyms of “honesty” leads to a variety of different interpretations:

Authentic. Conscientious. Genuine. True. Trustworthy. Virtuous.

How do these attributes relate to design? And how do we discuss what is being communicated by the things we design—especially when most of these things speak only indirectly? If honesty is viewed as

a line of communication between designers and users, when is a designed object (in the broadest possible sense of the word) being honest and when is it not? Is honesty possible to define in any absolute sense?

VIRTUOUS.



Keinonen, Turkka.
*Designer, Users and
Justice.* Bloomsbury,
2017.

A common analogy for honesty in human beings is that someone is considered honest when what's inside is outside—when a person is “transparent.” Similarly, design could be considered honest when form follows function: when the aesthetic of the design does not try to hide the workings of it. This is also a usability-related understanding, and approaching design with this mindset ensures that what we design can be understood and used with high levels of success by users. Such an honesty invokes in the user a sense of connection to the functional essence of the design. Legendary designer Dieter Rams spoke of honesty directly through his “Principles of Good Design” as well as indirectly through his work. His work shows gratuitous amounts of such honesty and leads to an experience and aesthetic which charms many—including myself.

A different argument could be made when we look at designs with a playful aesthetic, like many products by Alessi, the Italian housewares company. A bottle opener shaped like a caricatured monster may not be “honest” with respect to its core function

TALENTED

99%

but resides in the wonderful buffer zone of communication which humor creates. In such a case, form—instead of just following the function—tiptoes behind it, taps it on its shoulder, and chuckles in its face. Function doesn't seem to mind.

“Honestly, I’m just trying to have fun!”

The “what’s inside is outside” analogy can be discussed for material choices as well. I have been writing this article at a plywood desk which was built in part by my friend and architect Nathaniel Steirnueck. It is a prototype for an architecture studio desk with the purpose of being easy to produce in mass quantities. It is made with CNC machined plywood sheets that can be assembled without any fasteners or glue. The wood hasn’t been stained, finished, or coated. One can feel the texture on the surface of the table. The unfinished wood has absorbed marks from the activities that must have been done on this desk—smudges and marks from paint, pens, and possibly some dropped food. The desk proudly wears its history and feels completely unpretentious. I enjoy this desk and in some sense, it feels truly honest. But, does this mean that stained or coated wood is dishonest? I don’t think so. There has to be more to honesty, right?

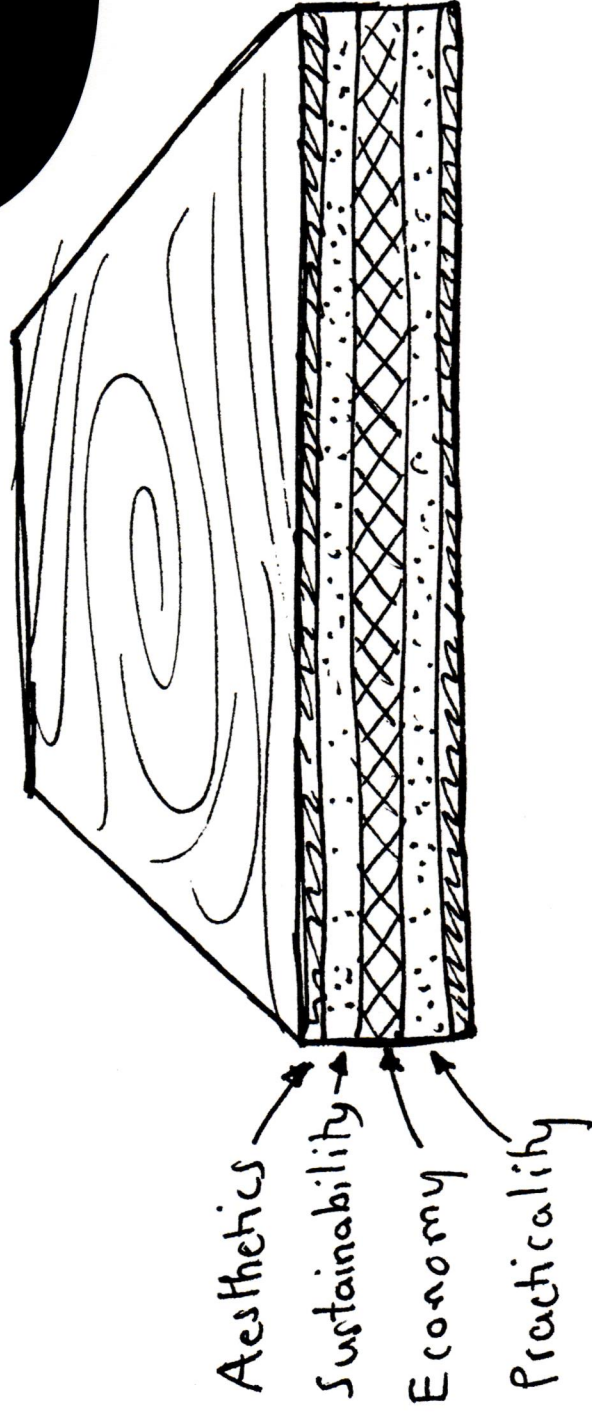
The history of veneered wood is a good metaphor for how truth can have different layers when viewed cross-sectionally. Wood veneering (the practice of cutting thinly-sliced layers out of blocks of wood and using this to cover a more structural and economical material) began in ancient Egypt (veneering.net). More recently, veneered wood is layered over newly engineered wood-based materials, such as Plywood, MDF, Particle Board, etc. To some, layering cheaper structural material with a thin layer of beautiful wood may seem like artifice, but it may also be argued that it makes simple sense to isolate the aesthetics and structure of the material in this case. With limited natural resources, veneering wood is very economical and sustainable. To which of these truths we associate veneered wood determines our perceived honesty of it. Nathaniel Steirnueck opines that wood is derived from trees as a raw material, and that from the moment we start changing the raw material, it is “dishonest” unless it is transformed in a way that celebrates the essence of its origin.

We are surrounded by a multitude of such objects which are made to look like a different material than they actually are. Plastic components made to look like metal, wood, or other traditional materials

"The History of Wood Veneer." Veneering.net
www.veneering.net/history-of-wood-veneer/, 2018.

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WHY WOOD VENEER?



Papanek, Victor. *Design for the Real World*. Pantheon Books, 1971.

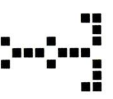
a common example. We see this in numerous consumer products and interior design components. Gotta get that “premium” look, right? Consider a coffee maker with external components of injection-molded plastic made to look like lustrous metal. Is the designer being honest by using components which don’t look like what they are actually made of to reduce manufacturing costs? Are the designers trying to lie to the buyers and sell a fraudulent sense of luxury? **What if the designers are trying to generate, within low income populations, a false, yet soothing, sense of wealth—something that comforts them?**

Honesty can be looked at in terms of the context of the design. Even this seems to raise more questions. We may have seen images of hotel lobbies in the United States with fountains sitting next to Roman arches, and rooms borrowing cues from the Victorian era with a design that seems out-of-context and unrelated to the hotel’s history. These examples may generate visual discomfort and seem dishonest. Victor Papanek in “Design for the Real World” criticizes the pulling of objects out of their cultural and functional context into new ones without good reason. An example of Japanese tatami mats used in a western household is discussed. Tatami mats, which are made with rice straw packed in woven

I feel that, in the same vein, every design is honest about something. The relevant question by this definition is, “what is the design

rush, have the primary purpose of absorbing sound and filtering dirt particles. They are a good fit in the Japanese system and work well with the kinds of shoes worn indoors and outdoors. However, the difference of context, usage, and environment makes tatami mats incompatible with western households (Papanek). If we flip the coin yet again, is there another side to this story? I think so. Functional considerations aside, could the installation of tatami mats in a Western household mean that a part of Western culture yearns for exploration and evolution? Does culture have to be static? Could this mean that the design is being honest about a deeper level of context, suggesting where a culture is, or may be, heading?

This leads us to think about whether honesty exists on some level in all design, if we look at honesty as something less like a line of communication connecting designer and user and more like a window revealing deeper truths. Zen Buddhist philosophy says that “being oneself” is the only thing that one can do and is something that we naturally do every moment, even in moments when we “don’t feel like ourselves.” I feel that, in the same vein, every design is honest about something. The relevant question by this definition is, “what is the design honest about?” Are the Roman arches



Avis can't afford not to be nice.

Or not give you a new car like a lively, super-torque Ford, or not know a pastrami-on-rye place in Duluth.

Why?

When you're not the biggest in rent a cars, you have to try harder.

We do. We're only No.2.

in a Las Vegas hotel commenting about a culture which seeks a sense of royal luxury even if it isn't genuine? Could the tatami mats in a Western household speak of the resident's tendency to want to explore new cultures and evolve? By this definition all design is honest. Such a definition could have value for designers as a reflective tool. Looking at that which has been designed in the past through this lens may allow for a deeper understanding as we prepare ourselves to design for the future.

With multiple interpretations of honesty, the question of intent becomes very significant, almost inseparable from honesty. When choosing materials for a shelf system, why did the design firm choose veneered plywood? Was it for artifice, or was it for economy and practicality? When designing a piece of modern technology, why was a "simple" and "clean" aesthetic adopted? Was it to suggest through the marketing campaign that buying a slick lifestyle product would promise a slick life once purchased? Or, was it to hide all signs of the guts of the machine with the intention of letting users focus on the main point of interaction: the touch screen? Or, was it both of these? What is the intent?

about?"

In any case, what value does honesty bring to design? Why must we practice being honest? On the practical side of things, dishonest design leads to frustrated users and tense user-producer relationships (Kessler). Conversely, honest design leads to better experiences and more trust between user and producer. Let's take the example of marketing campaigns and strategies. As a personal account, just 25 years of life experience has made me cynical enough to doubt much of the marketing that comes my way. I don't manage to buy anything online these days without checking reviews at multiple locations until I find something that really feels trustworthy. Consumer awareness groups and campaigns worldwide are proof of this tension. On the other hand, honest marketing (not an oxymoron) can make experiences and relationships genuinely more satisfying. An example is a 1962 ad campaign by the car rental company Avis which openly marketed the company's second-place market share and said that this is the reason Avis tries harder to generate a better customer experience. The campaign soon took their market share from 18% to 34% (Kessler). More than anything, since design seems to be linked with all human activity, if there is value to honesty in anything, why not design honestly as well?

Kessler, Doug. "6 Examples of Insane Honesty in Content Marketing." *Velocity*, 2017, www.velocitypartners.com/blog/6-examples-of-insane-honesty-in-content-marketing/.

Goldman, Kevin. "Material Honesty on the Web." A List Apart, 2013, www.alistapart.com/article/material-honesty-on-the-web.

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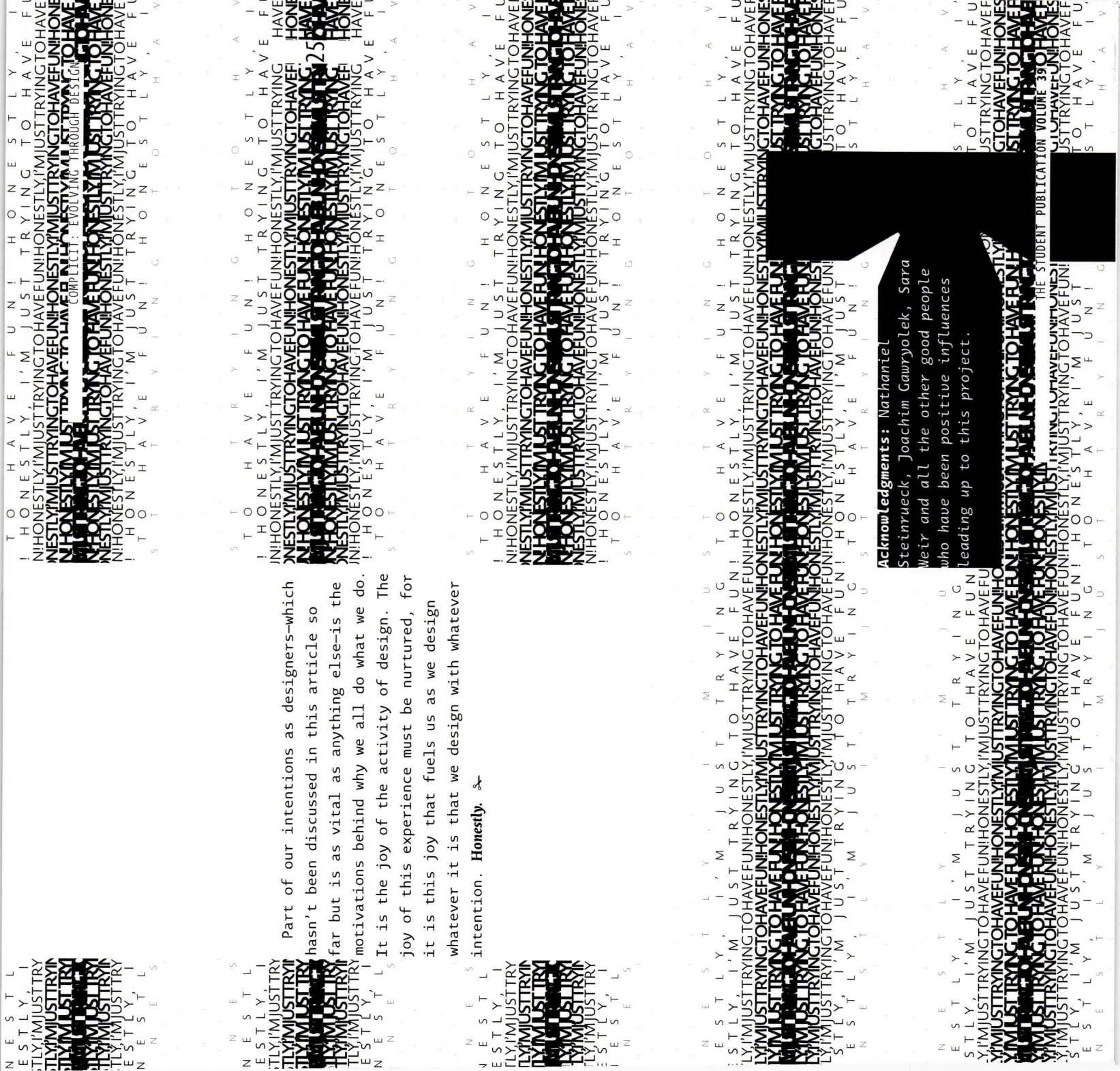
So what does this all mean for the activity of design? How must we, as designers, consider honesty and intent as we work? Design is a complex activity and being aware of our intent and of what we communicate at each stage of the process can be challenging.

Turkka Keinonen, a scholar and professor of design at Aalto University comments in "Designers, Users and Justice" that it is difficult to be ethical while designing, since the activity requires abandoning known models of behavior (Keinonen). A possible method could be to consciously make time and space during projects for reflection and thought, to really take a step back to explore what the design might be saying. Conversations, reading, and getting to know more about domains outside of design can be another way to broaden perspective and get out of our design process "rabbit holes."

Most of us work in teams with many different professionals, such as designers, engineers, managers, marketers, etc. Each of these groups can include a vast number of people with different intentions and aspirations, which can make collective intent seem almost impossible. Organizations use methods such as discussing core values and project goals to try to align intent. Collective awareness is as important as individual awareness, considering the scale

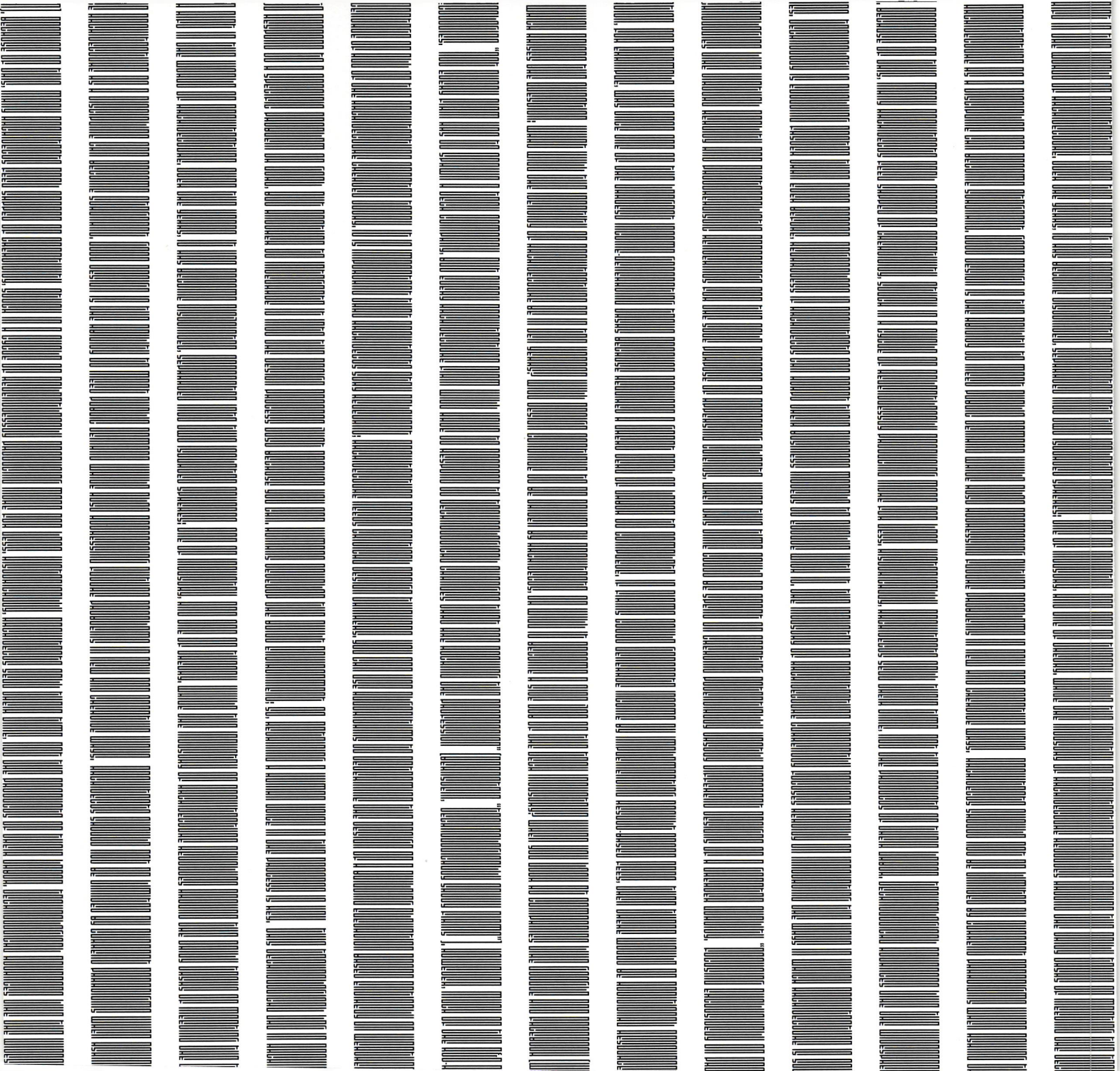
and structure of industries today. This may also be an argument for smaller and more decentralized businesses and organizations reminiscent of the craftsman era where the scale makes it realistic to build teams with aligned intent.

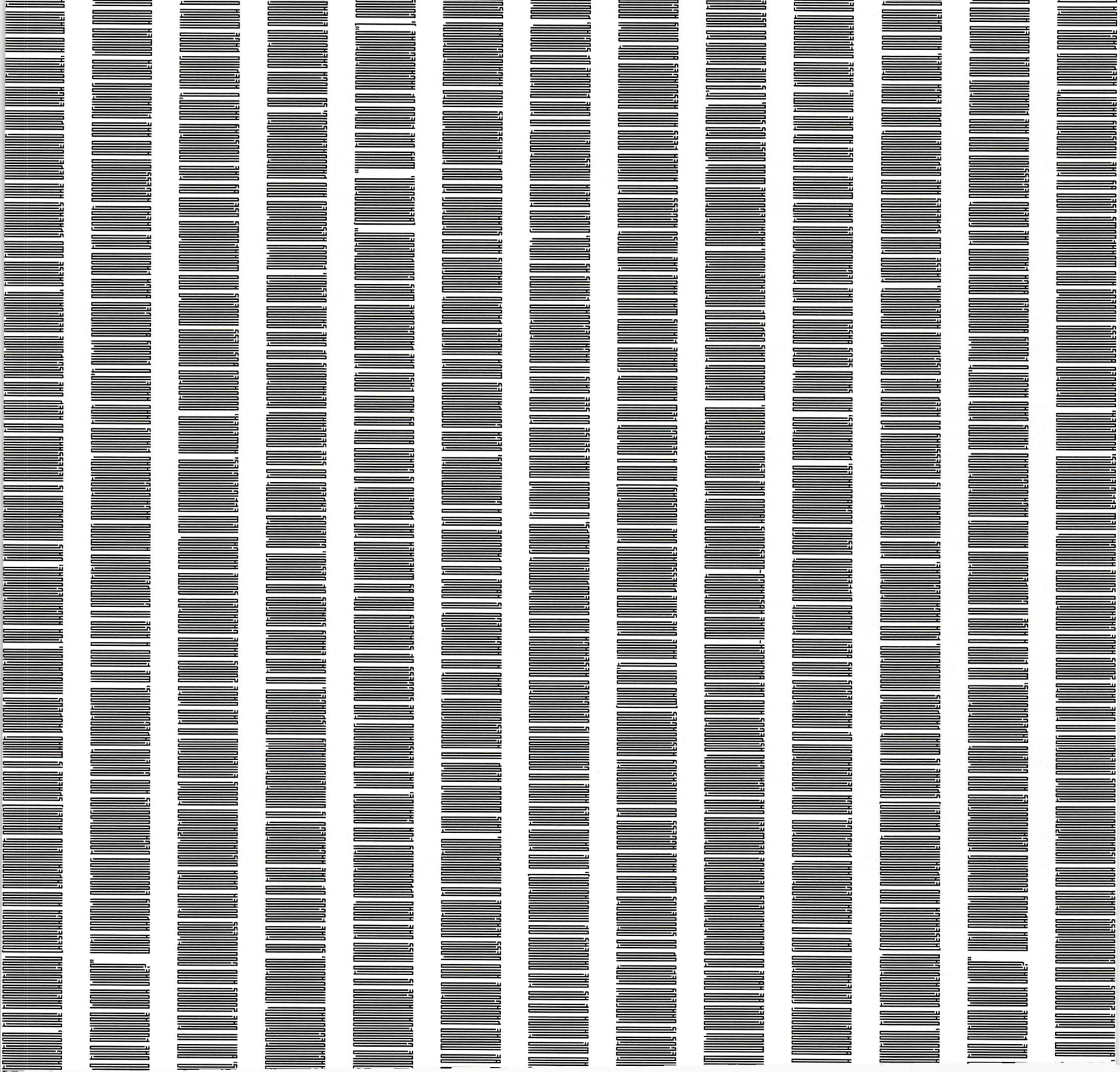
While thinking about how users interact with and perceive designs, it may help to involve users more in the design process, to make users aware of the implications of different design decisions, to elucidate for them the different paths a design project might take, and to listen to what they have to say and how they perceive the design. This is especially important when there are multiple stakeholders involved and the design touches the lives of many different people. It may help to at least listen to—if not trust—our intuition and gut, which can often bring clarity and direction to the most complex situations. It may also soothe us to acknowledge the limited amount of control we have on the outcomes of our projects and on actual user interactions. Beauty and frustration can co-exist in moments when we recognize the unexpected interactions and effects of what has been designed.

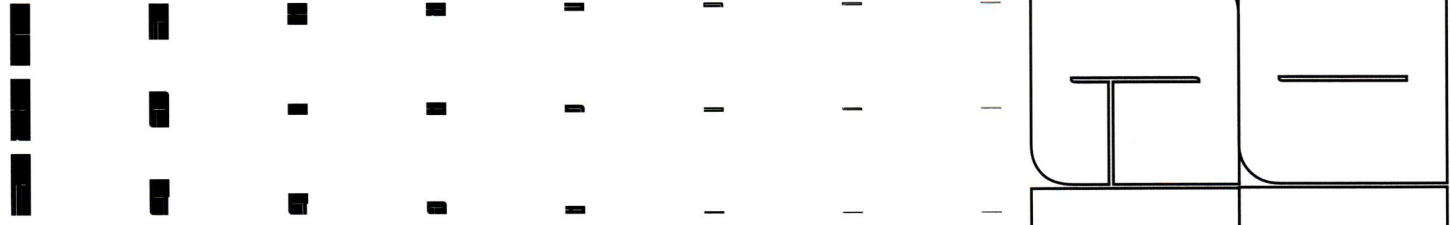
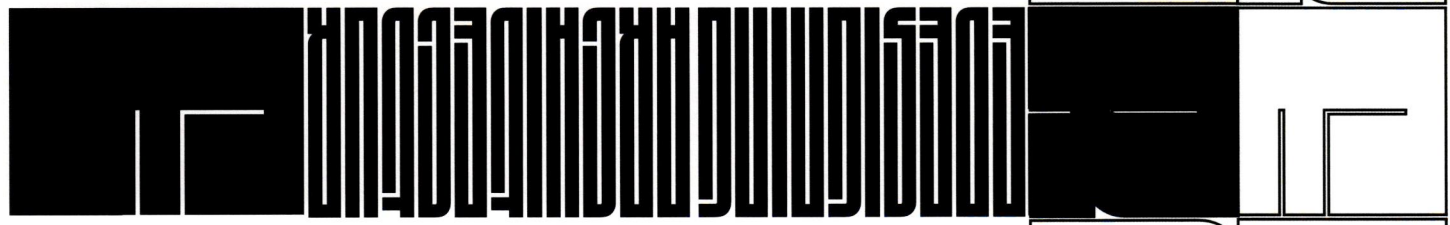
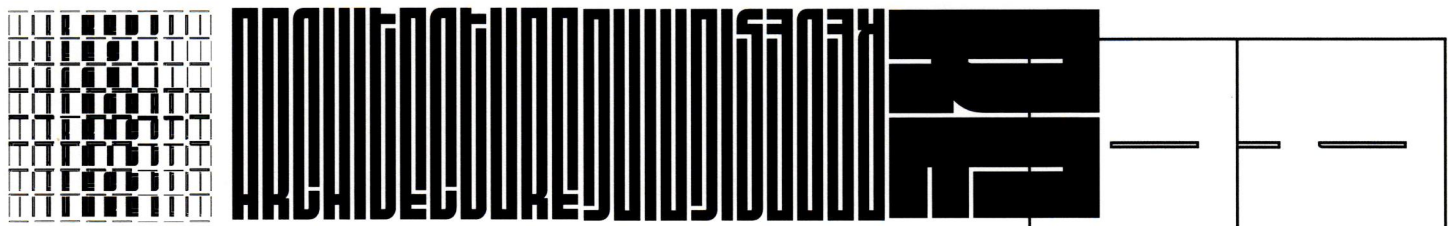
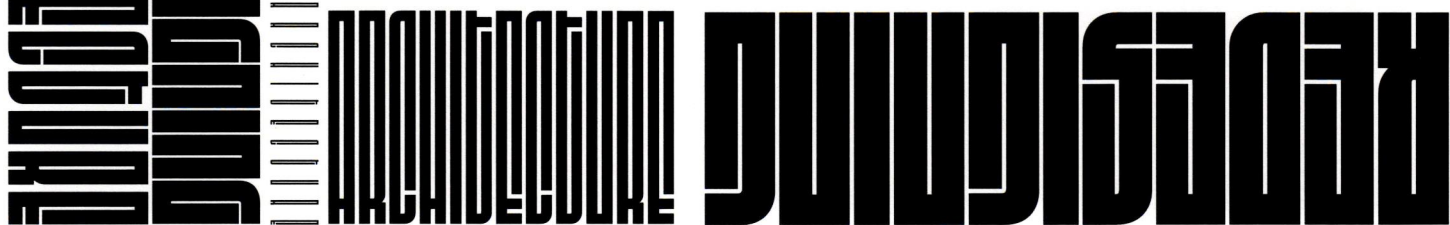
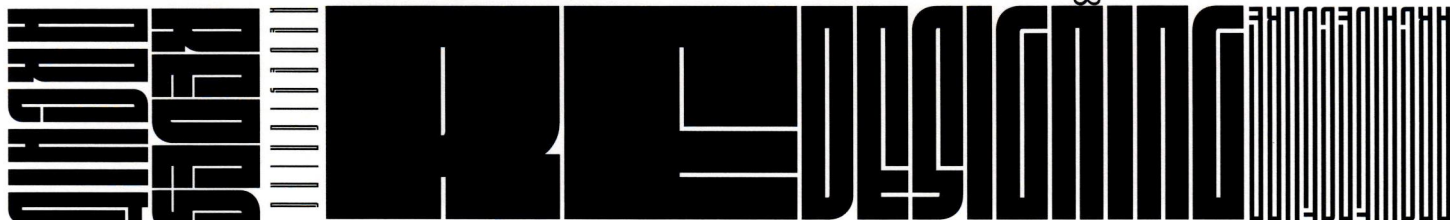


Part of our intentions as designers—which hasn't been discussed in this article so far but is as vital as anything else—is the motivations behind why we all do what we do. It is the joy of the activity of design. The joy of this experience must be nurtured, for it is this joy that fuels us as we design whatever it is that we design with whatever intention. **Honestly.** ✨

Acknowledgments: Nathaniel Steinrueck, Joachim Gawryolek, Sara Weir and all the other good people who have been positive influences leading up to this project.



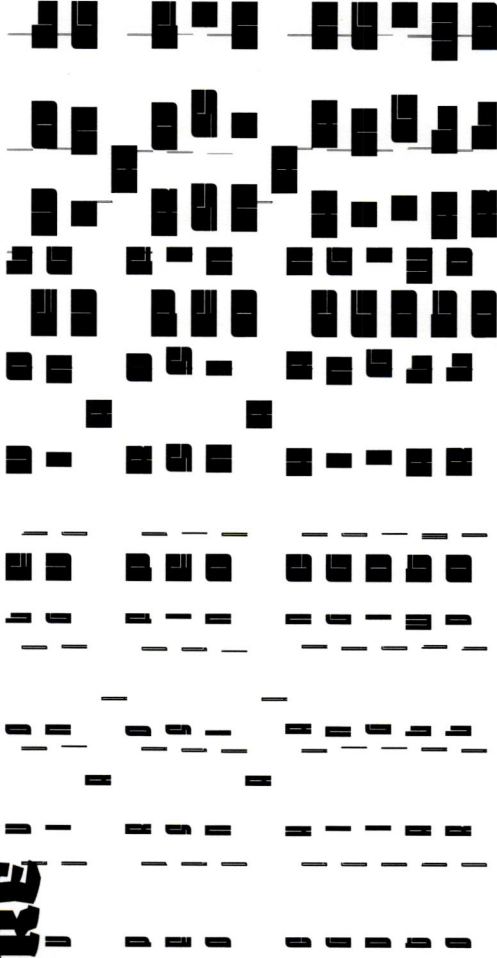




REDESIGNING ARCHITECTURE

Evolving a Profession in a Changing Digital World

EMILY KORZYNSKI



THERE IS A RIFT IN THE WORLD OF ARCHITECTURE. OVER THE YEARS, IT

HAS BECOME **DISJOINTED**, **SEPARATED** into two isolated spheres: one of industry, and one of theory. While the industry of architecture revolves around the daily tasks of meeting the technical demands of construction, the theoretical (research and experiment driven) sphere is what propels innovation. For architecture, this innovation is necessary to keep the discipline relevant. These two spheres are dependent upon each other,

Pederson, Martin C. "The Future of Practice: Large Firms." *Architectural Record*, Architectural Record, 1 June 2018, www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/13468-the-future-of-practice-large-firms.

30

and when they're not in balance Architecture as a discipline can become stagnant.

Good design is the ability to meet public demand while also addressing future problems in new and creative ways.

Architects should not be limited by current paradigms when asking themselves: "What should the future look like?"

With rapidly evolving technologies and client expectations, we find a rise in competition among architectural firms that haven't fully bounced back from the Great Recession and are fighting over lower and lower fees (Pederson). Because of this, many architects feel sapped of creativity, stuck in a cycle of relentlessly producing more for less. Historically, architects sell their time, not the products of their labor. Technological advances like the widespread use of CAD in the 1980s, BIM in the 2000s and countless other data visualization tools emerging in the late 2010s have created some radical new efficiencies. However, outdated business models and workflows used by the industry aren't keeping pace with these new technologies.

Technology is evolving faster than ever before, regardless of whether architects can adapt their business models to evolve with it. The industry of architecture currently focuses heavily on innovating the ways in

THE INDUSTRY OF ARCHITECTURE CURRENTLY FOCUSES HEAVILY ON INNOVATING THE WAYS IN WHICH ARCHITECTURE IS SOLD, RATHER THAN SELLING ARCHITECTURAL INNOVATION, SO THE FOCUS OF THE ARCHITECT IS UNINTENTIONALLY MISPLACED.

which architecture is sold, rather than selling architectural innovation, so the focus of the architect is unintentionally misplaced. In the early stages of design, clients expect to see several iterations of the same design, fully resolved and photorealistic. So much creative energy is spent on new technologies like virtual reality and photorealistic renderings for the sole purpose of appealing clients, when this time could be spent on creating potentially vastly different designs of a greater quality.

Bernstein, Phil. "Why the Field of Architecture Needs a New Business Model." *Architectural Record*, Architectural Record, 1 June 2018, www.architecturalrecord.com/articles/13462-why-the-field-of-architecture-needs-a-new-business-model.

"Focusing exclusively on productivity and cost/schedule conformance is to miss the real opportunity for change, like measuring the success of surgery not by whether the patient is cured but by how fast the procedure was completed" (Bernstein, "Why the Field of Architecture"). Construction documentation, for example, was once one of the largest income-generating tasks because required a great deal of labor to complete. If firms could generate income by implementing result-based fees, then there would be additional resources for firms to afford to be more proactive and less reactive to innovation. This would help in redesigning what an architect is able to provide to a community.

Tech companies with higher profit margins are starting to dip themselves into architectural visualization territory, which raises the question: **what will the identity of architecture be in ten years? Will design continue to be driven by architects, or will it become a side job of the tech industry?**

When you look at companies like Google and Facebook (which tend to exemplify who we think of as the drivers of innovation), one thing they have in common is dedicated research and development groups. It would make sense to see this in architecture firms as well, given their investment in the future of social, political, and economic ecologies. "Not every

firm has to spawn a tech company, but every architecture firm will have to respond to technological changes that are rocking the profession" (Bernstein, "Technologically Savvy Firms"). However, much of the R&D-related work done by architects is largely left up to students who have access to university resources (who don't have the same pressures of industry) and a select few avant garde firms who have the most access to higher fees and resources but only account for a small percentage of all the architecture created today.

It is important that architects stay relevant; architecture needs critical design thinkers. You can use algorithms to determine the design of a building elevation based entirely on weather patterns, **but an algorithm will never be able to qualitatively mediate between the technical aspects and the broader—more abstract—questions about the design intention.** Without this type of intervention, architecture will lose its soul. It's one thing to use technology as a tool to respond to a specific problem or goal, but another to integrate it into the design process just because you can. Humans develop the built environment; so, retaining a human voice in the process is key.

W U L F

This technological lag in architecture is exacerbated by a broadening generation gap in architectural practice. Each generation of architects has been taught different design vocabularies, priorities, and skill sets based on the technologies that were in use at the time. These different generations converge in the workplace, and communication between the generations under these circumstances can be very difficult. Often, in design firms, these different cultural vocabularies aren't shared between the generations; so, as each generation is superseded by the next, that's when we see the biggest cultural/technological shifts in the workplace. However, this age gap also slows down innovation because technology is now evolving faster than the generational shift.

So, how can architects come to afford the privilege of having more experimental resources? I think the real question is: **How can we redesign architecture to place more value on innovative designs, rather than impressive displays?**

Theoretical work also provides an opportunity for designers to continue to pursue their true potential. While universities focus on the individual crafting their own design language, **the profession has the unique potential for each of these designers to come together as a collective with real working knowledge**

of how buildings are put together, how materials work, etc. Since there is a need for both theoretical work and the working knowledge of real world experience, it would seem in looking towards the future, that it is critical for the different generations of architects to share a more direct relationship with one another.

At its core, what architects deliver is the full resolution of an idea **that doesn't yet exist**. If design firms begin to adopt more theoretical practices into their design paradigms, this would allow for design thinking beyond the restraints of the present moment, allowing **architecture to become a protagonist in the world of the future.** ✨

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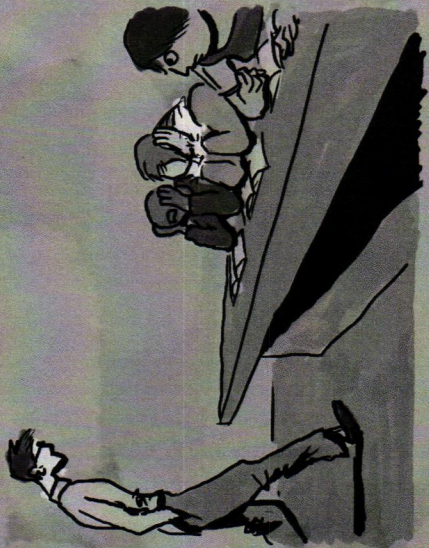
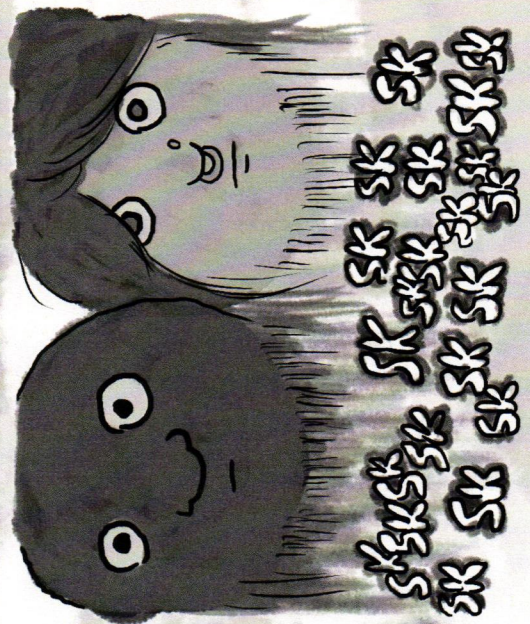
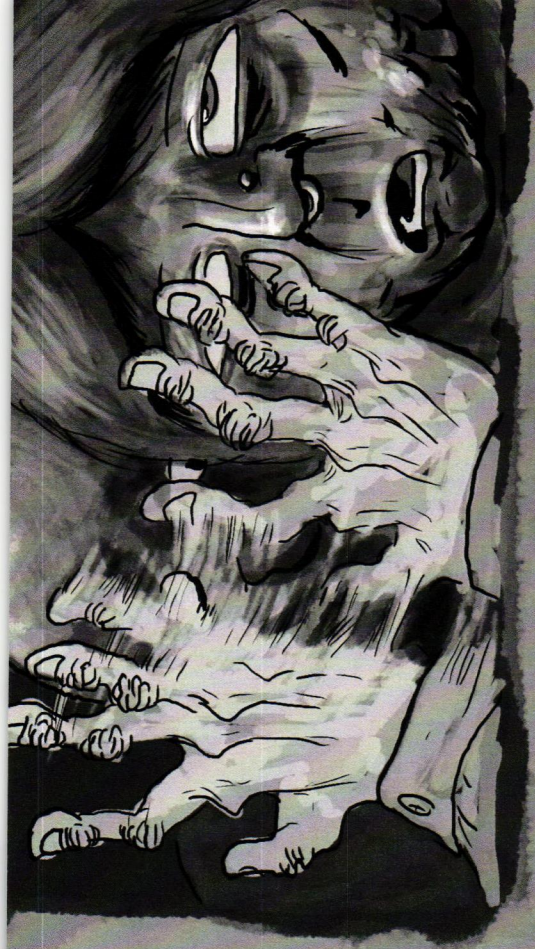
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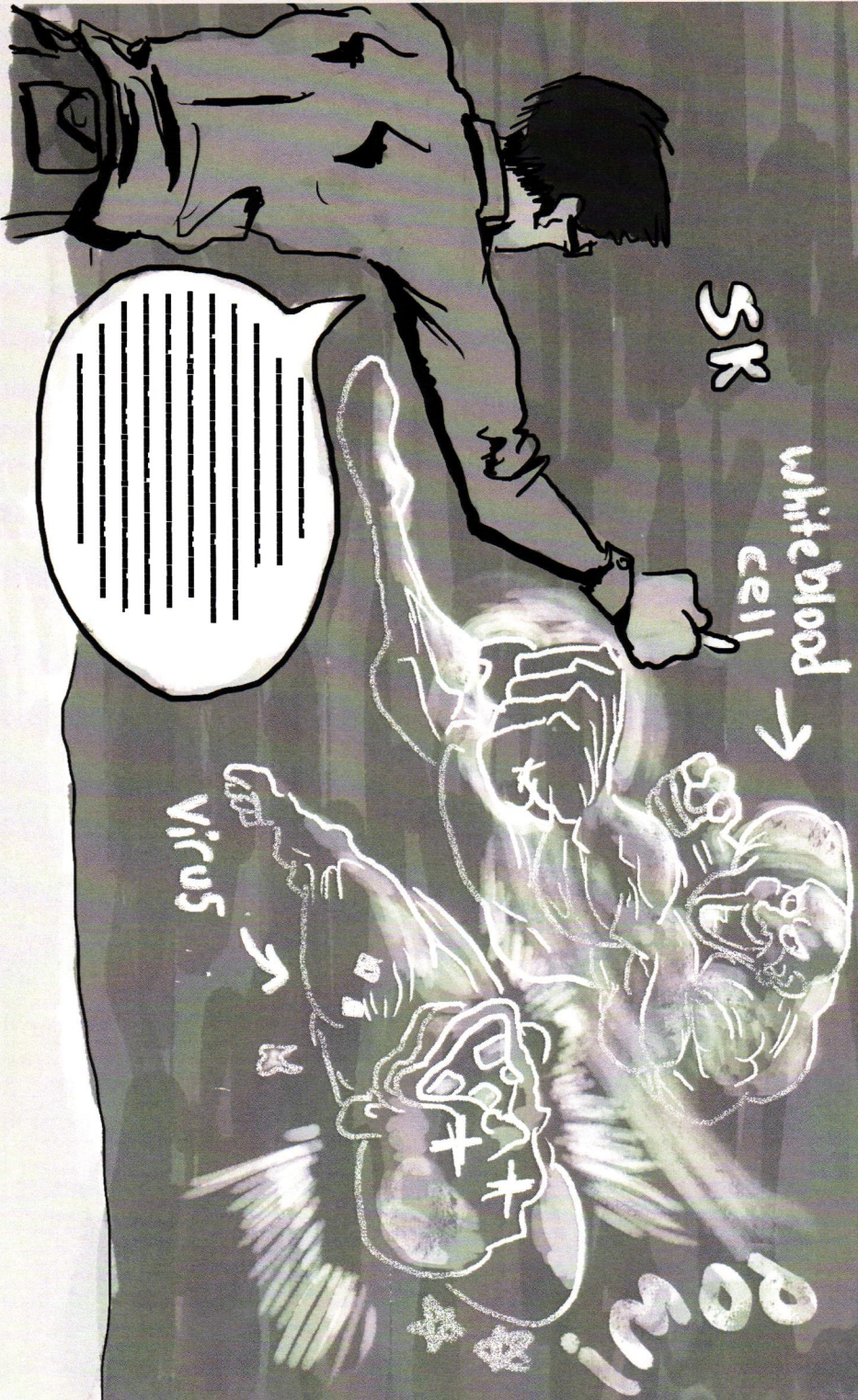
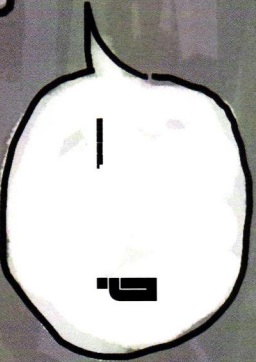
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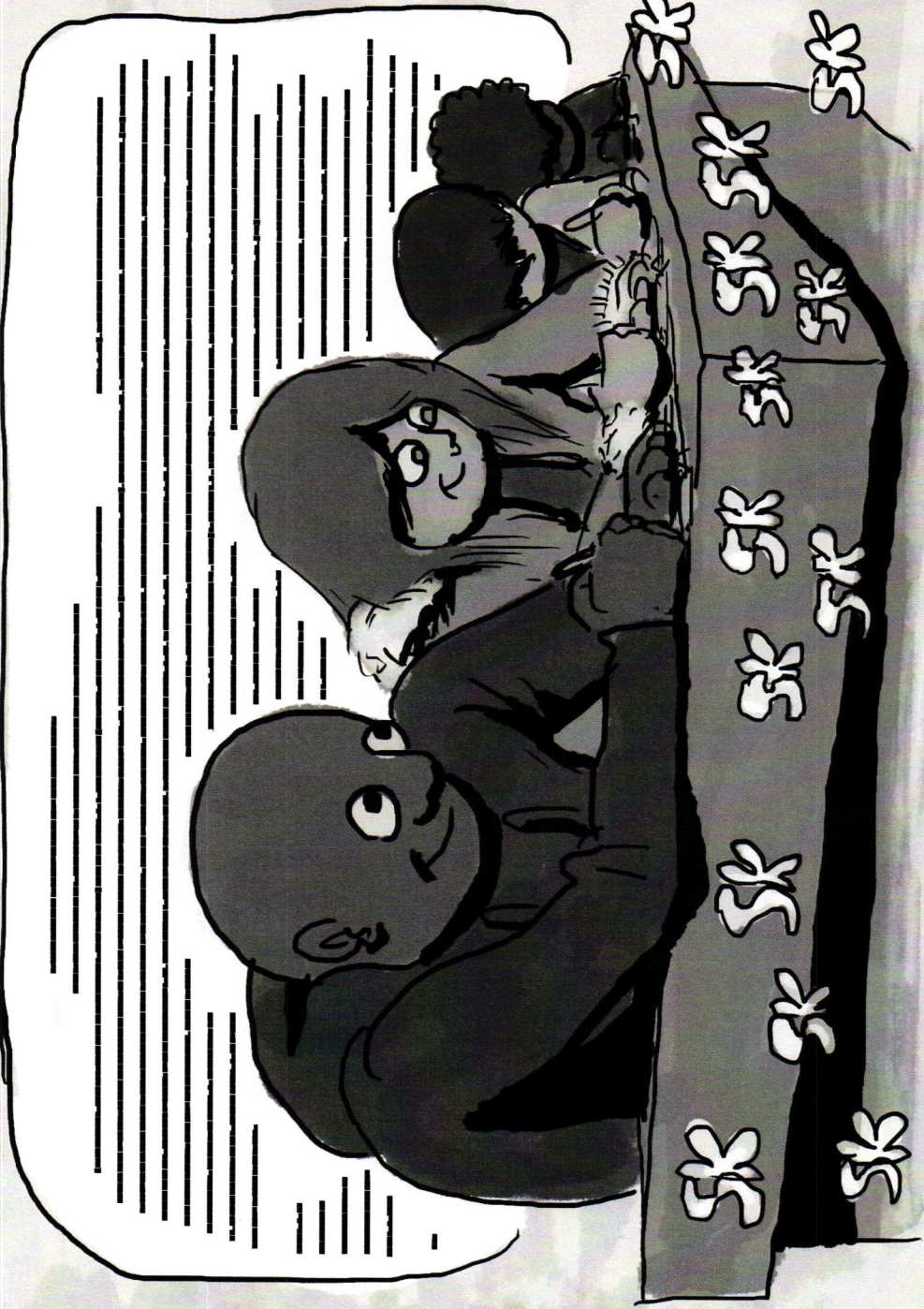
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to stay on top
of others. They
need our help.










ಖ್ಯಾತಿಪಡಿಸುವ ಸಂಘಟನೆಯನ್ನು ರಚಿಸುವುದು

ಖ್ಯಾತಿಪಡಿಸುವ ಸಂಘಟನೆಯನ್ನು ರಚಿಸುವುದು ಉದ್ದೇಶಪೂರ್ವಕವಾಗಿ ನಡೆಯಬೇಕಾದ ಕಾರ್ಯವಾಗಿದೆ. ಇದರಲ್ಲಿ ಮೊದಲನೆಯದೇ ಉದ್ದೇಶವನ್ನು ಸ್ಪಷ್ಟಪಡಿಸುವುದು. ನಂತರ ಅದರ ಮೂಲಭೂತ ಮೌಲ್ಯಗಳನ್ನು, ಕಾರ್ಯದಕ್ಷಿಣೆಯನ್ನು, ಸದಸ್ಯರನ್ನು, ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಘಟನೆಯನ್ನು ರಚಿಸುವುದು. ಇದರಲ್ಲಿ ಮೊದಲನೆಯದೇ ಉದ್ದೇಶವನ್ನು ಸ್ಪಷ್ಟಪಡಿಸುವುದು. ನಂತರ ಅದರ ಮೂಲಭೂತ ಮೌಲ್ಯಗಳನ್ನು, ಕಾರ್ಯದಕ್ಷಿಣೆಯನ್ನು, ಸದಸ್ಯರನ್ನು, ಮತ್ತು ಸಂಘಟನೆಯನ್ನು ರಚಿಸುವುದು.



Disrupting
Innovation
Disrupting

THE PIN-UP CRITIQUE HAS BECOME A RIGID AND RITUALIZED PART OF THE DESIGN PROCESS—

which limits discourse while encouraging narrow perspectives. Originating in the fine arts and dating back to the 19th century École des Beaux-Arts and its atelier model, the pin-up critique established a hierarchy of knowledge between students and instructors that lives on today (Whittington 28 and Anthony). For designers, critique is often a method of initiating students and their work into the design community. **The pin-up critique, however, limits this experience.** Both students and instructors involved in the pin-up critique find it repetitive and often **see it as a formality rather than a helpful part of the creative process.**

Disrupting this system of pin-up critiques can lead to the development of more responsive and productive critique methods that benefit both students and the design community as a whole.

Anthony, Kathryn H.
“Design juries on trial:
The renaissance of the
design studio.” 1991.

Thank You!

The critique, as an assessment method, originates from the fine arts (Whittington). It was in the École des Beaux-Arts where the critique established a closed, jury format through which the tutor defended the student's work. The Bauhaus elevated the critique from being a closed session to an open review where an interested public could join the discussion (Koch). Both, however, maintained a master/apprentice model that, to this day, dictates the relationship between instructor and student.

From these beginnings, a number of variations on the critique have emerged, most of which share common characteristics. Blair describes the critique as "the main formal point for formative assessment" in art and design education, where a student presents their work in front of their peers and faculty (Blair 83). In this case, it acts primarily as a visual and verbal exchange of ideas and opinions. **In addition to providing an opportunity for formative assessment, a critique allows the student to develop presentation skills to communicate their design vision and rationale.**

The "pin-up," specifically, is a form of review where students display their work on a large wall to receive feedback from instructors and peers. According to Dr. Deanna Dannels' observations:

Bell, Catherine M. "Ritual: Perspectives and dimensions." Oxford University Press on Demand, 1997.

Whittington, J. "The Process of Effective Critiques." *Computer & Graphics*, 28. 2004.

Koch, Aaron. "The redesign of studio culture: A report of the AIAS Studio Culture Task Force." *American Institute of Architecture Students*, 2002.

Stinson, Elizabeth. "IBM's Got a Plan to Bring Design Thinking to Big Business." *Wired*, January 2016;

Blair, Bernadette. "At the end of a huge crit in the summer, it was 'crap' - I'd worked really hard but all she said was 'fine' and I was gutted." *Art, Design & Communication in Higher Education*, 2007.

"In some cases, one student would pin her work to the wall, and the class would respond. In others, several students would pin their works to the wall, and smaller groups would respond. In fact, in some of the pin up situations, the designer of the work did not necessarily speak about their work first. The pin up, then, was mostly about public feedback on in-progress work" (Dannels 144).

There are varied structures within a pin-up critique that illuminate and assess both visual and language competencies, including student presentations and defense. Overall, it has become a rigid and ritualized part of the design process, in part due to its formal structure and hierarchical nature.

The pin-up critique, in many ways, is representative of the design process as a whole. Design has become an overarching worldview, a way of relating to—and altering—culture and environments. Corporations, business schools, and entities around the world seek to teach "design thinking" to non-designers, distinguishing the outlook of a designer from that of the rest of the world.

pin-up critique



"The integration of ritual elements into a design practice has the potential to provide an overarching sense of community and intention to what can be a disparate and disjointed community."

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In situating design as a unique way of seeing the world, proponents of design thinking have sought to break the design process down into a series of specific steps or rituals, like the pin-up critique, that introduce new rigidity and structure into the process (Stinson).

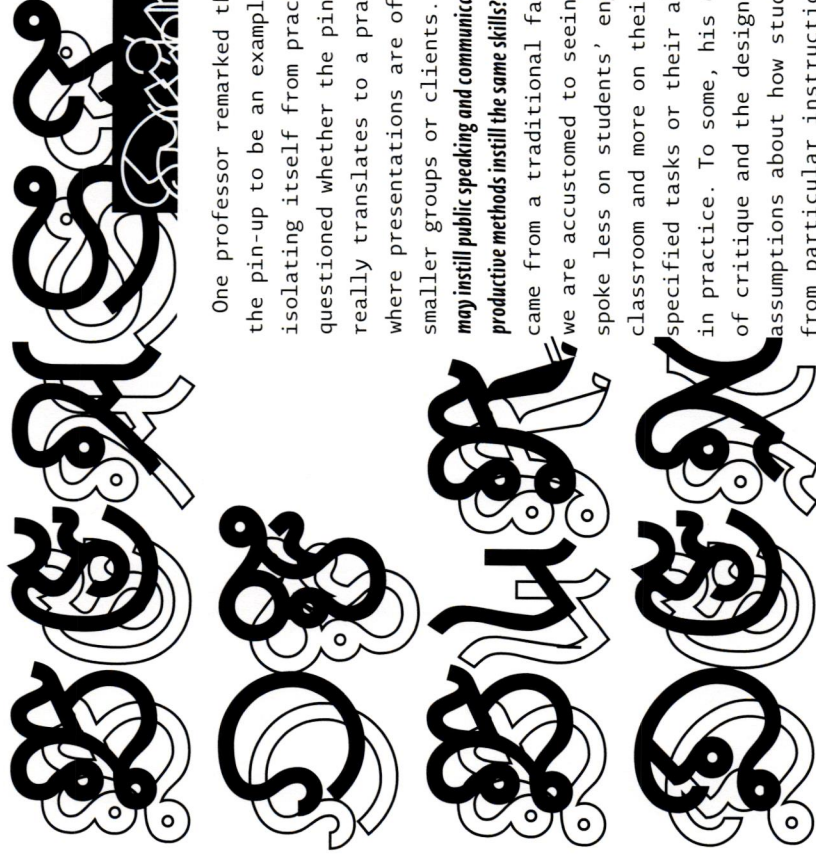
Beyond design, a ritual is an act which is regularly performed in a set, precise manner that the participant has imbued with symbolism and meaning ("Ritual", Merriam-Webster). Rituals help develop a sense of community and connect individuals through shared experiences, like rites of passage (Draper). **The integration of ritual elements into a design practice has the potential to provide an overarching sense of community and intention to what can be a disparate and disjointed community.** Designers can share their common pin-up critique experiences and connect over them. These rituals unite members despite divisions in time and location.

Rituals, however, involve repetitive actions and structures, bringing rigidity into the design process. In his book, 'Designing Designing,' John Chris Jones reflects, "no new thing, no originality or creativeness, is going to emerge if one sticks to an orderly design process in

which one never gets in a mess, never loses touch with one's preconceptions, never lets go of the known" (Jones). By introducing these rituals, designers sacrifice originality and innovation in favor of order and connection.

By exploring the intersection of design rituals and practice, designers can expand personal design rituals to include a larger community. Designers must walk a fine line between order and innovation and examine these rituals for opportunities to both discuss and innovate the design process.

As part of the Design Research Society's 2018 conference in Limerick, Ireland, the authors of this paper held a conversation on the ritualization and structure of pin-up critiques. With input from global educators, we found that the pin-up can be a burden for both faculty and students. Educators involved in the conversation found themselves challenged by rising enrollment and short attention spans to make critiques engaging and meaningful for all students. In some cases, critiques may take an entire day, with each student only receiving a few minutes' attention.



One professor remarked that he found the pin-up to be an example of academia isolating itself from practice. He questioned whether the pin-up critique really translates to a practice setting where presentations are often made to smaller groups or clients. **While pin-up critiques may instill public speaking and communication skills, couldn't more productive methods instill the same skills?** This educator came from a traditional faculty role-one we are accustomed to seeing in design. He spoke less on students' engagement in the classroom and more on their engagement with specified tasks or their abilities to thrive in practice. To some, his descriptions of critique and the design studio made assumptions about how students benefit from particular instructional methodologies rather than offered examples of how students have actually perceived those learning experiences. This revealed a flaw in our exploration: We were looking to faculty for input rather than engaging the students directly.

Despite its challenges-and the limited perspectives provided-the conversation illuminated a range of global views on the critique process. The disruption of the

Dannels, Deanna P.
 "Performing tribal rituals: A genre analysis of "crits" in design studios." *Communication Education* 54.2, 2005, pp. 136-160.

pin-up critique provides a unique challenge for both educators and students as an opportunity for disruption and a place to welcome more voices into the conversation about design.

Generally, the pin-up critique enforces a single voice through its format and structure. After students pin up their work, the instructor will determine what is good or bad in the work presented. This approach perpetuates the perspectives of the faculty rather than encouraging the varied perspectives of students.

An alternative to the pin-up critique is the generative critique, one example being the "improv critique" developed by Professors Nida Abdullah and Denise Gonzales Crisp. Here, students work together to critically engage with their work as well as develop new directions for future iterations. The improv critique begins by forming students into groups of four or five. The instructor then asks students to submit something they're currently working on, such as a logo iteration, to the group. Each student in the group presents the work to be "critiqued" on a table. The critique begins as one person in the group offers a statement about what he or she perceives

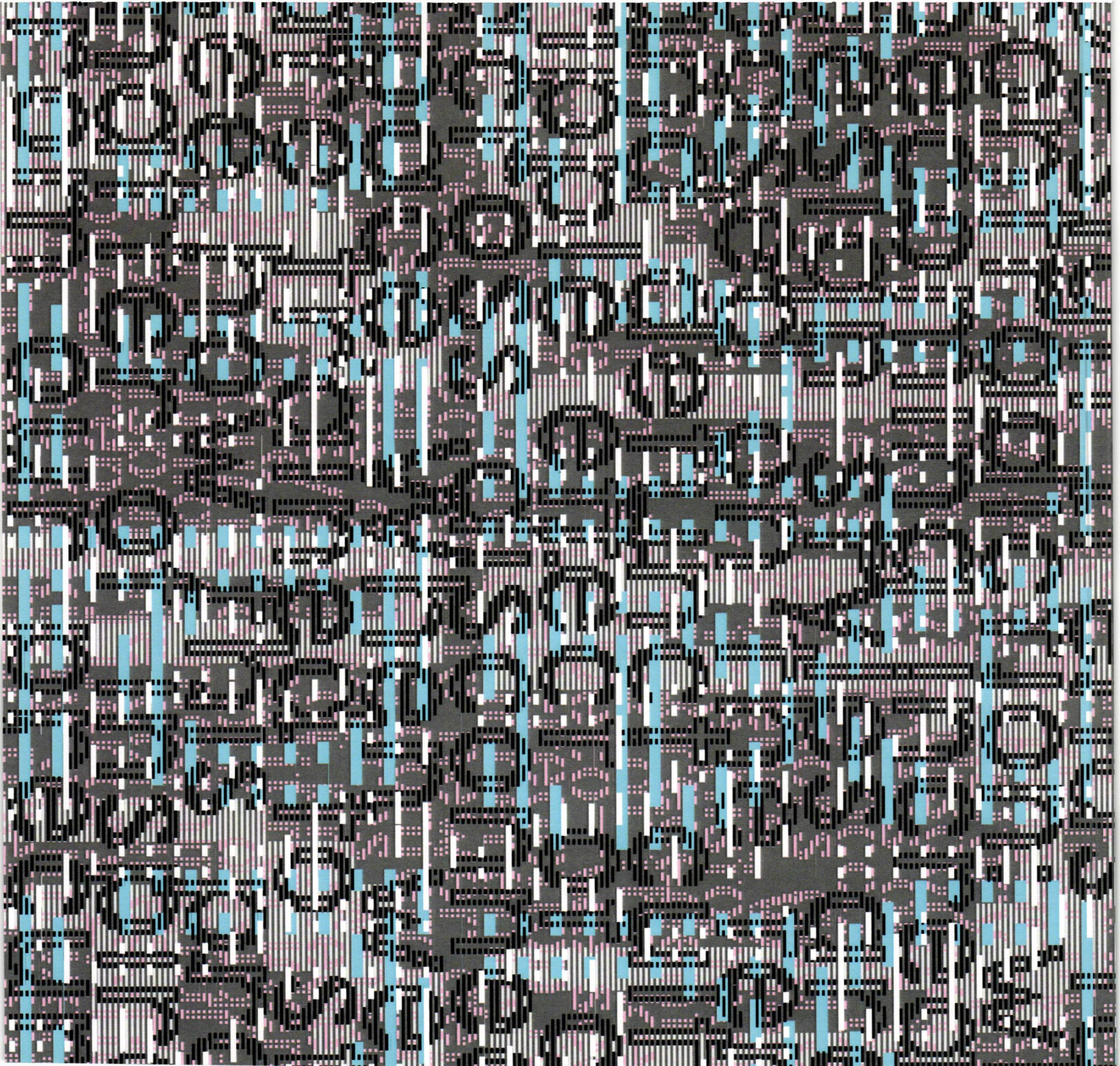
Draper, Jonathan A.
 "Ritual Process and
 Ritual Symbol in
 'Didache' 7-10." *Vigiliae
 Christianae*, vol.54,
 no.2, 2000, pp. 121-158.
 JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/
 stable/1584865](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1584865).

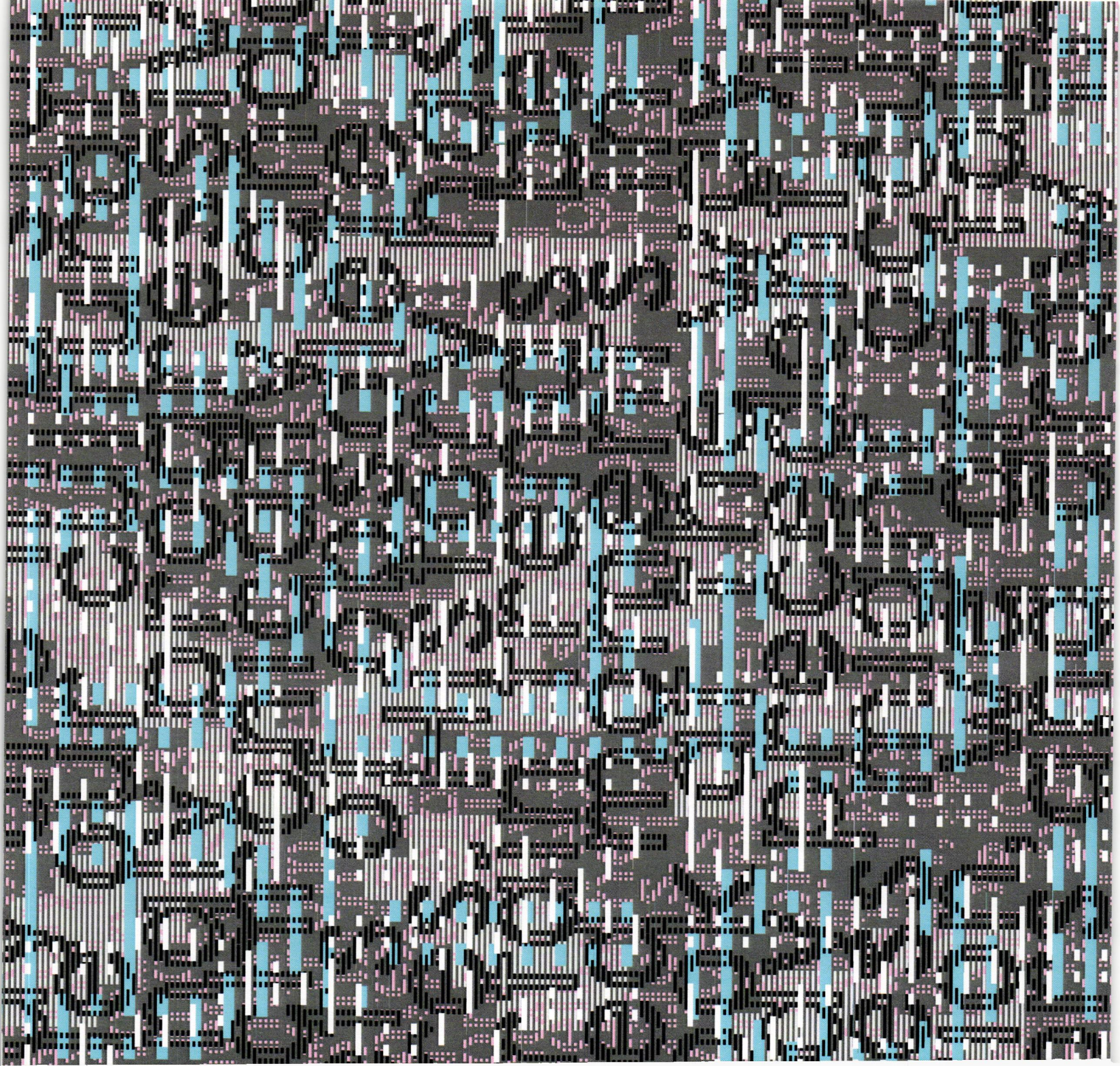
Hogg, M. A., Hohman, Z.
 P. and Rivera, J. E. "Why
 Do People Join Groups?
 Three Motivational
 Accounts from Social
 Psychology." *Social and
 Personality Psychology
 Compass*, 2: 1269-1280.
 2008.

in the work. He or she might state, “It’s a **glittery bug**,” or, “**The tree is exploding.**” As the exercise asks students to enter into a space of play, every statement that is said is true in that moment. Another person in the group then responds with, “Yes, and...,” adding new information. For example: “**Yes, and the bug is glittery because it is dancing;**” “**Yes, and the tree is exploding into shards of glass.**” This approach reframes the notion of critique itself. Rather than a formalized ritual where instructors hold a place of power, students utilize improvisation and play to encourage divergent thinking, complexity, and many different perspectives.

As our conversation at the Design Research Society 2018 conference—and the research done by Nida Abdullah and Denise Gonzales Crisp—shows, critiques provide unique opportunities for designers to co-create and disrupt traditional pedagogical methods. By exploring the hierarchies in critique, from both an educator’s and a student’s perspective, designers can look for varied means of expanding the design process and generating new ideas in a space that many students see as a formality. Designers and educators must ask themselves: “What should the critique mean to students and how can it be used as a tool for exploration and ideation rather than as a display of hierarchy?” &

Jones, John Chris.
“Designing Designing.”
Architecture Design and
Technology Press. London.
1991.







InDesign

File

Edit

Layout

Type

Object

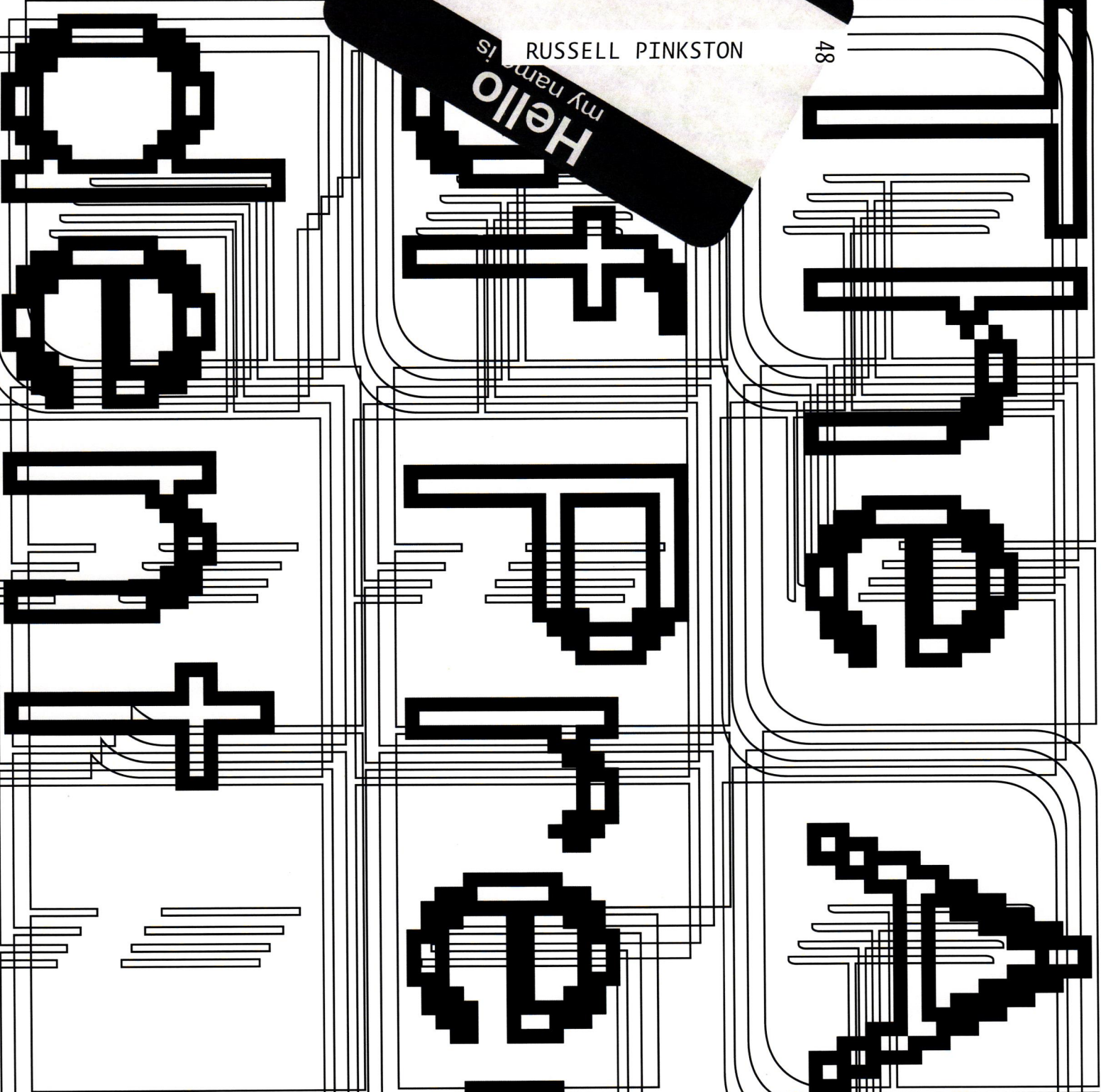
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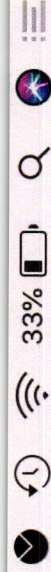
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Window

Help

Hello
my name is





DESIGN TRENDS TODAY ARE IN A STATE

OF CYCLICAL CONTRADICTION: while our cultural ideals are becoming increasingly progressive, our design styles are chronically anachronistic, based on the tenets of obsolete technologies and defunct cultures. History has shown a ripple effect of certain trends being recycled across disconnected moments in time and space. When we look at the way designers are trained to study precedent, it is easy to see how this process might occur; as a matter of inspiration, we are taught to learn from our precursors and draw from their successes, but we must be weary of this influence.

When we turn to precedent for inspiration, we must be mindful of the historical contexts and cultural connotations that are bound up in that precedent and the bias that their appropriation creates.

When we look at the keystone design movements—from the Renaissance to Art Deco—we see that they each arose as a process of reaction and counter-reaction to their predecessors (Hebdige), a relationship which is inherently finite. When these movements die and are later resurrected into newer generations, they are often colored with new meanings that reflect contemporary ideals, but they are nonetheless rooted in times and

erasure <zeitgeist>

places which were fundamentally different from the present. This system of precedential appropriation can create a kind of duplicity where our cultural identity—our zeitgeist—does not match up with the products of our design. **At best, this can lead to a culture which is lacking in unique, meaningful symbolism; at worst, it can lead to the erasure of disparate cultures.**

Historically, this kind of appropriation is not a new occurrence. Literary critic Harold Bloom referred to this cycle in poetry as “the anxiety of influence,” that poets are hindered creatively by the influences of their precursors (Bloom). I believe the same holds true for designers, and that this reactionary reformation is a **pendulum**.

When the **gauzy**, bourgeois decorations of the Rococo period became unpalatable to the democratic revolutionaries of the mid-1700s, the trend shifted toward Neoclassicism, which appropriated classical Greek and Roman styles and imbued them with new meanings to suit the era. In the 1800s, when new technologies allowed for the mass-produced wares of the Industrial Revolution, these bland designs led to a resurgence of artisan craftsmanship that became the Arts

reactional reformation <anxious>

Heddige, Dick.
Subculture: The Meaning
of Style. Routledge,
1987, pp. 1-4 and 15-18.

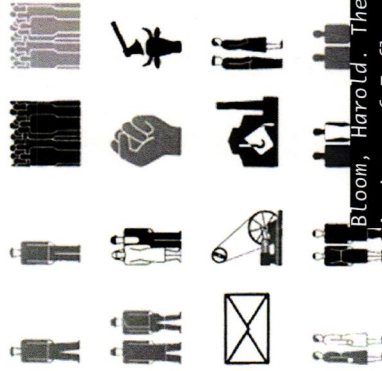


wary

Hello
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in

Neurath - ISOTYPE.png



BLOOM, Harold. *The Anxiety of Influence*. Oxford University Press, 1997.

& Crafts movement. When designers had lost their taste for Western colonialism, the elemental structures of Modernism gave way to the diametrically-opposed chaos of Postmodernism; but, today, we find that the sudden and intense globalization brought on by the Information Age has given those orderly Modernist elements new uses, and so we have appropriated them to suit our current ideals (despite their antiquated, colonial context).

While it is true that we can use the study of precedent as a historical lens through which to view our present culture,

**this resurrection of old styles
creates a sort of refraction—
the ghost of a previous time
superimposed on the present.**

This blurs any unique, cultural, design identity and leaves us with reactionary designs echoed from the past. In comparing, for example, the mid-1900s Modernist approach to book page layouts with the page layouts of contemporary web design, we can find an elemental understanding of the way we digest visual information. But, we also find ourselves adopting a system that was based on very different, increasingly obsolete, technology.

Our current design epoch is a kind of “New Modernism.” As we move through the Information Age, we find ourselves inundated by the sheer bolus of information to digest on a daily basis, and so we have turned to the reductive styles of Modernism to winnow out the clutter. With the popularity of Apple products and the trend toward “flat,” iconographic interfaces, we find an affinity for clean lines, symmetry, and the utilization of negative space that is reminiscent of the work of Modernists like Jan Tschichold and Otto Neurath. **These styles attempt to declutter the delivery of information with layouts that prioritize content over design.** We are adopting the reductive visual standards set by Modernism, but for entirely different reasons. These designs (or lack thereof) bleed into our daily lives and have increasing influence on our cultural aesthetics. We can see the

evidence of this perhaps most dramatically in the great public spaces of humanity’s new natural habitat: the internet.

As any website has the potential to reach a global audience, web design has created the need for a universal style that can be intuitively understood by the people of any culture. If a website’s design has any degree of learning curve, people will immediately back out of it and choose a different site. **WE SIMPLY DO NOT HAVE TIME** for design to interfere with the delivery of information. As such, visual systems are occurring that dictate style through page layout structures which recall the Van de Graaf and Golden canons popularized in Jan Tschichold’s book designs (Tschichold). The use of these templates as basic, elemental frameworks for universal understanding across cultural divides has led us to an updated interpretation of Modernism: that its reductive styles are skeletons which are not meant to be the end result (as De Stijl and the Bauhaus so erroneously assumed) but templates upon which further, more personalized, designs can be developed.

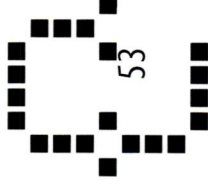
This critiqued and adapted interpretation of Modernism has led to its resurrection in contemporary graphic design. A standardized, structural underpinning allows for websites

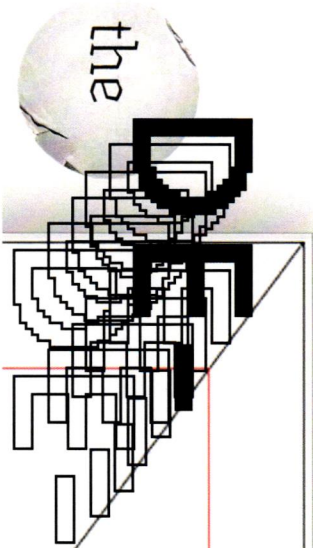
Eames, Charles and
Ray. The India Report.
National Institute of
Design, 1958.

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the delivery
of information with layouts that
prioritize content over design

Tschichold, Jan. The Form
of the Book. Translated
by Hajo Hadelar, Edited
by Robert Bringhurst,
Lund Humphries, 1991.

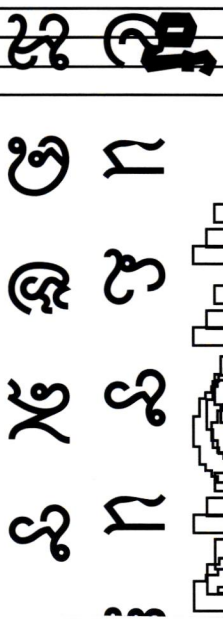
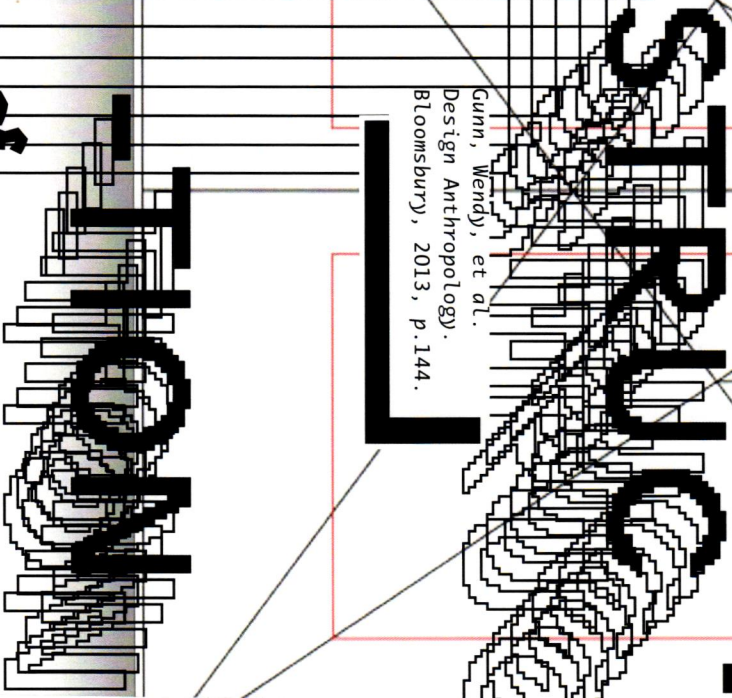




to be created all over the world that feel intuitive to us. However, we must also consider the ethical ramifications of this cross-cultural standardization. **While this reductive style can be efficient when designing in our immediate system, it can also be damning to future innovation and destructive to cultural identity.** Designing from a template is naturally restrictive and complacent, imposing limits on the evolutionary scope of design. There is no practical reason for websites to resemble books, other than this simply being what people are used to. But, as our world becomes increasingly digital, these antiquated designs are increasingly at odds with our technology. As designers, it is our responsibility to envision new horizons for design as the world changes. Imagine what the internet might look like if its designs were not based on technology developed thousands of years ago.

Like so many things, it's all a matter of inspiration. When designers rely too heavily on precedent for their inspiration, the result is lacking in innovation. Especially in a field like design, which thrives on being cutting edge, this is the kiss of death for both design and culture alike. This problem is compounded when the template is culturally exogenous. The elemental structure of Modernism is a Western style,

Gunn, Wendy, et al.
Design Anthropology.
Bloomsbury, 2013, p.144.

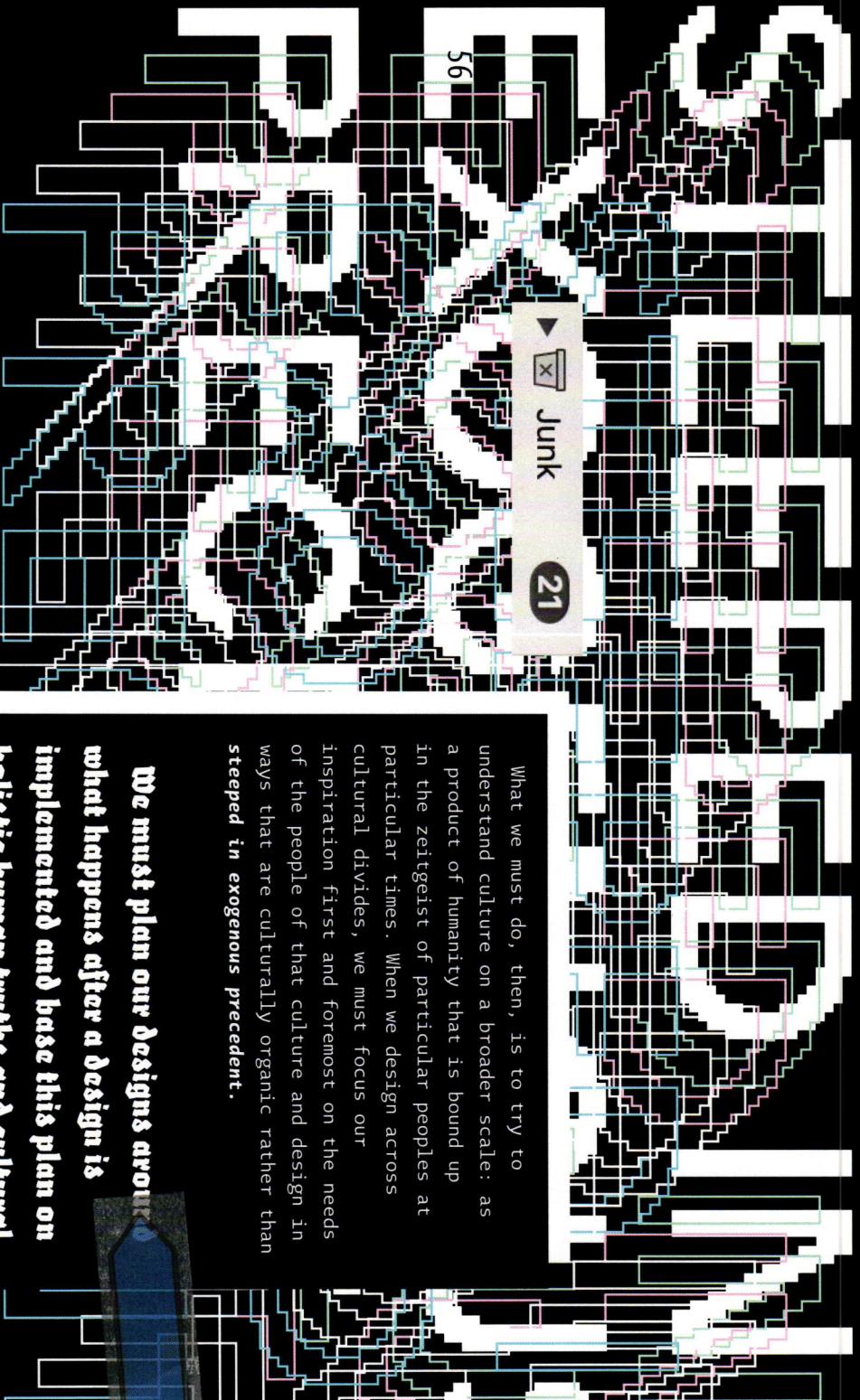


and implying that this Western style is culturally universal is shaky ethical footing. Design trends are very easily influenced by exogenous interference: the way American styles continue to be influenced by Modernists who fled Europe during World War II, the way Indian designs have been influenced by Western colonialism via British occupation and designers like Ray and Charles Eames (Eames), the way ancient Japan was influenced by Chinese writing systems. History has shown that exogenous design, through appropriation or colonization, has a viral effect when introduced to new cultures.

What design institutions consider precedent—the canon of Western (mostly European) design—is important, but it is also hegemonic. Precedent is an arbitrary history, not a road map to be followed—any more than contemporary automobiles should follow the path laid out by the Oregon Trail. In order to enter a new period of reform, we must learn to discard this mindset of using precedent as a template and instead embrace designing from within the vacuum of our relative futures. It is through this that we might learn more about the nature of design as an organic product of culture than the Modernist reduction of style could permit.

When we look at the success—the pervasiveness—of cultural design trends, from the Mayans to the Bauhaus, we must observe what made them so successful. In a word: **KAIROS**. These movements were successful because they were the organic creations of their particular places and times. These were indigenous trends that arose from the zeitgeist into systems which suited their respective cultures. They were not designed to be compatible with other places and times. Design Anthropologist Wendy Gunn writes that “designs, it seems, must fail, if every generation is to be afforded the

opportunity to look forward to a future that it can call its own” (Gunn 144). Designers like Jan Tschichold or William Morris or Leonardo Da Vinci were reacting to previous systems, creating or encouraging rebellion against them; but, as reactions, the systems they created were necessarily impermanent. Tschichold himself later renounced his earlier modernist work as fascist and authoritarian (de Jong). Once the reactionary fervor settles—once a rebellion becomes the status quo—its motivations are no longer inherent. Even more so when it has been appropriated from a different era or culture.

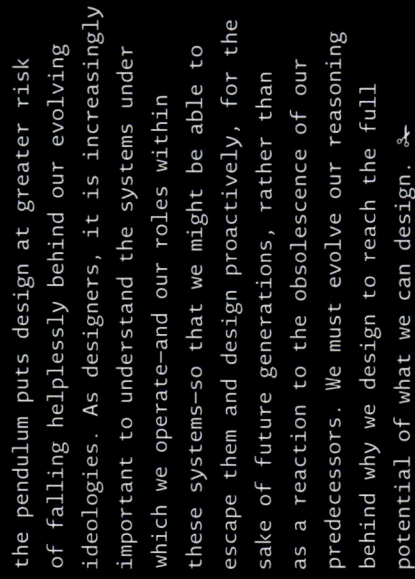


de Jong, Cees W. Jan
Tischichold – Master
Typographer: His Life,
Work & Legacy. Thames &
Hudson, 2008.

What we must do, then, is to try to understand culture on a broader scale: as a product of humanity that is bound up in the zeitgeist of particular peoples at particular times. When we design across cultural divides, we must focus our inspiration first and foremost on the needs of the people of that culture and design in ways that are culturally organic rather than steeped in exogenous precedent.

We must plan our designs around what happens after a design is implemented and base this plan on holistic human truths and cultural relevance, else we risk interfering with the natural course of design evolution.

If rebellions are the intentionally-designed reactions to obsolete practices, then it would make sense that this pendulum swing, this push-and-pull, would be a natural counter-reaction to that rebellion. Eventually, this chain of reactions evolves into new systems, but, historically, this evolution has been dilatory. Today's cultural progression is such an avalanche of reformation that every backswing of



the pendulum puts design at greater risk of falling helplessly behind our evolving ideologies. As designers, it is increasingly important to understand the systems under which we operate—and our roles within these systems—so that we might be able to escape them and design proactively, for the sake of future generations, rather than as a reaction to the obsolescence of our predecessors. We must evolve our reasoning behind why we design to reach the full potential of what we can design. ✎

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YOU'RE DROPPED OFF NAKED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE JUNGLE, BUT YOU ARE ALLOWED A SINGLE ITEM TO TAKE WITH YOU—WHAT DO YOU CHOOSE? This

is the question imposed upon contestants of the survivalist television series *Naked and Afraid*. You begin to assess all of the goods, conveniences, and technology you own and which our modern society has to offer. Ultimately—like most contestants—you realize that your basic needs are few, yet vital. Also, like most contestants, your item is one that aids you in the process of obtaining food, water, or shelter—because everything else is a luxury.

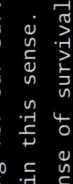
Usually the item is a machete, fire starter or some sort of metal container. These are items which most of us don't carry with us on a daily basis—quite ironic. But why would you? You and I are not fighting for our survival day to day—at least not in this sense. Our first-world, societal sense of survival is much more nuanced, and, from the vantage point of being cold, thirsty, and hungry in the jungle, it may be easy to write off as superficial. After all, you can't drink the internet. Yet, were it to become unavailable, a panic-wondering if your paycheck cleared, correspondence lost with clients, an assignment that required uploading, similar to that of a desperate survivalist digging for water might begin to set in.

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Merely surviving in a first-world society seems a bit of a given. The pressures we are under are less about surviving and more about thriving. It is this blurring of lines between what consists of a need and what consists of a want, the blurring of lines between survival and luxury—combined with our capitalistic expectations—that has kindled our throwaway culture.

The concept began simply enough: I provide a product or service that the community wants or needs, and I will be compensated, ensuring my survival. If I become one of only a few doctors in the area and provide a quality service where there is a great need, I will thrive; I may even become modestly wealthy. On a local vocational level, the supply-and-demand economics of Adam Smith (the Invisible Hand guiding communities' economies to stabilize and thrive) has been wildly successful and is the driving force behind the explosion in technological advancements of both the industrial and digital revolutions.

Capitalism is demonstrably the greatest economic engine conceived to date and has afforded more people upward mobility and a means to pursue their passions and dreams than any other system in the world. It has provided an outlet to pursue two of the greatest motivators: fame and fortune. Not just fame, but recognition: to earn based upon

your performance and production. To the designer, the concept of the patent (legally protecting and ensuring this recognition and ownership of drawings, intangible creations, and ideas) sparked an entrepreneurial revolution. This has all worked fairly efficiently—perhaps a little too efficiently—and things are beginning to change.

We are at a crossroads. Globalization, automation,

population, and survivability all lay at the feet of the designer.

On smaller scales, we see that capitalism is fair and effective (in theory). However with a globalized economy, local identities and local economies become less certain. The fate of the toy store demonstrates this. There was a time when local toy stores were the traditional outlet for kids to buy their toys. Then, large national chains like Toys R Us moved in and wiped out many of those small, locally owned shops. And now, this past June, Toys R Us closed the last of its stores, unable to compete with online outlets like Amazon.

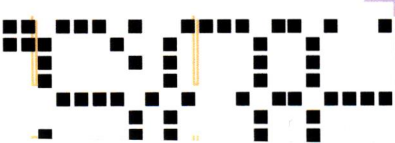
The guiding capitalistic principle is to deliver the most in-demand product for the lowest price point—maintaining an equilibrium of consumer spending and supplier profits—all the while allowing Smith's Invisible Hand to guide a certain harmony between consumer and supplier. With globalization, however, that harmony becomes potentially more elusive. Toys R Us did not have the same storied and invested link to a



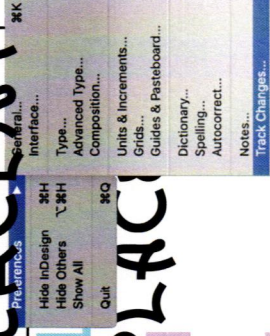
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community that local toy stores had—but Toys R Us was able to keep larger stocks of inventory and sell their products at lower cost than the locally owned shop. Likewise, today, Toys R Us was unable to compete with online outlets like Amazon. However, this step is much larger. When Toys R Us came to a new town, it was still a brick-and-mortar store that provided jobs for the community. Amazon, while offering lower prices, does not bring employment opportunities to the majority of communities in which it does business. This, in turn, creates retail deserts and is a trend that may resign some once-lucrative communities to a reliance on entirely online and next-town-over shopping.

I recently heard on the radio about opportunities to invest in a fully automated, robotic, frozen yogurt franchise. Likewise, scrolling through Twitter, came upon a promoted tweet about an automated, robot bartender kiosk. Part of the benefit as an investor, they explained, was you would not need to deal with the **hassle of human employees** and, from the consumer standpoint, the robot would be **more pleasant and desirable to deal with than a human employee** (and wouldn't require a tip). We see this in other areas as well: banks being built without drive-up windows, restaurants allowing customers to order by touchscreen, and, of course, the self-checkouts at the grocery store.



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A guiding principle to a successful capitalist society is that its citizens contribute—they work and earn their living. Otherwise, how can they buy the goods and services others are making to survive? Automation is becoming increasingly more present in our lives, both from a consumer's perspective and that of a designer. **With this automation comes less human opportunity.** In 1993, actor Brandon Lee died during the filming of *The Crow*, and several of his scenes were subsequently added through CGI. More recently, the *Star Wars* franchise saw Peter Cushing—despite having died more than 20 years earlier—seamlessly reprise his role as Grand Moff Tarkin in 2016's *Star Wars: Rogue One*. And, although she passed away in 2016, Carrie Fisher will supposedly appear as Princess Leia in *Star Wars: Episode IX*, which is slated to begin filming in late 2018. This is to say, if Peter Cushing is no longer needed to play Peter Cushing in a movie, how does this bode for the average Joe or Jane working a low-skill job on the verge of automation? In fact, automation doesn't only pose a risk to low-skill professions; financial planning, medical jobs—even journalism—have already, in a limited capacity, been replaced by AI programs. What happens if your general practitioner goes out of business because it has become more convenient for people to simply order a kit that is delivered to their home?

HUMAN OPP

GLOBA LIZATION

Convenience—the simplification of tasks—is a trend in design and technology that has been a priority since the invention of the wheel. Obviously, humanity has come a long way since the wheel was invented, and there are many, many processes which have been eliminated from daily life that I'm sure we're all grateful for. **However, it is within the process that the authentic happens, that humanity happens.** If we design convenience into—and process out of—every aspect of our lives to this logical end, where does that leave humanity? What the heck are we supposed to do?

We've all seen stories of regular people living paycheck-to-paycheck who one day win the lottery. Suddenly, they're multimillionaires with no idea how to manage their finances. **In ten years, they're flat broke or in debt.** This illustrates the removal of the process that we often need to appreciate—and even fully grasp—what we have. Winning the lottery is convenient, but it is **not** authentic. Process brings greater appreciation (not necessarily even firsthand experience in a process, but simply having a full understanding of it).

Globalization has allowed developed countries to design anything we can pay for but has allowed the ills of production and disposal to be out of sight and out of mind.

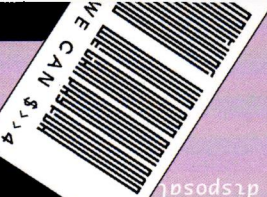
If only we used everything to the degree to which men wear their underwear, according

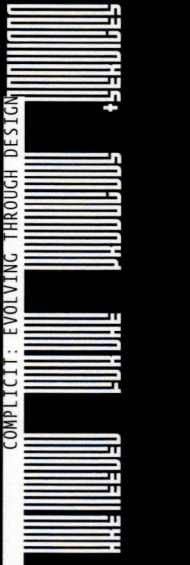
to comedian Jerry Seinfeld: “Men hang on to underwear until each individual underwear molecule becomes so strained it can barely retain the properties of a solid... We don't even throw it out, we just open the window and it goes out like dandelion spores.” Unfortunately, we know this to not be the case—in fact some fashion and technology trends encourage the opposite. The “distressed” clothing look (buying brand-new clothes that look like they've already been worn for years) essentially removes the process—as well as the sentimental value—of a shirt or hat that you've worn, lived in, and which bears the stains and weathering of your experiences.

The production end of globalization has equally unpleasant long-term effects. Other countries—particularly in the developing world—do not have the same human rights we enjoy in the United States. Businesses—seeking to manufacture the greatest output for the least cost and to offer the goods to market at the equilibrium value, thus achieving maximum profit—understand this. Thus, a whole host of jobs once held by Americans are outsourced to such countries as China and Bangladesh, where the workers can be paid pennies an hour to do anything from sewing your tennis shoes to assembling your smartphone for twelve-hour shifts (while confined to their factories, where they share dorms with a dozen other people). While the design showcases in America

ills of production

and disposal





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latest gadget, this is the reality of actually producing it and making it affordable to the American consumer.

After your phone, game console, TV, or any litany of other products with electrical components wears out (or you're just ready to get rid of it), you probably aim to do the responsible thing and take it to the recycling center. But, we have a distorted concept of the recycling center here. It's just a smelly assortment of garbage bins. We put the correct item in the correct bin, pat ourselves on the back and never think twice about it. The reality is that one-third of the world's garbage and recycling—including that TV you took to the correct recycling center—just gets shipped back to China where it is then dumped into giant mounds for local children and the impoverished to sort through to collect salvageable scraps while being exposed to toxins. **We are quick to look back and condemn the indifference of past generations, but we have our own problems about which we are generationally complacent.**

All of this lays at the feet of the designer. The world population is 7.6 billion people. At the beginning of the next century, the world population is projected to exceed 10 billion. Automation is inevitably going to reduce jobs and our quest for convenience will continue to remove processes, so where does that leave our individual survivability?

LUXURY SURVIVAL

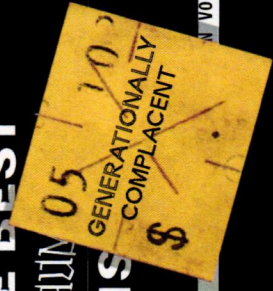
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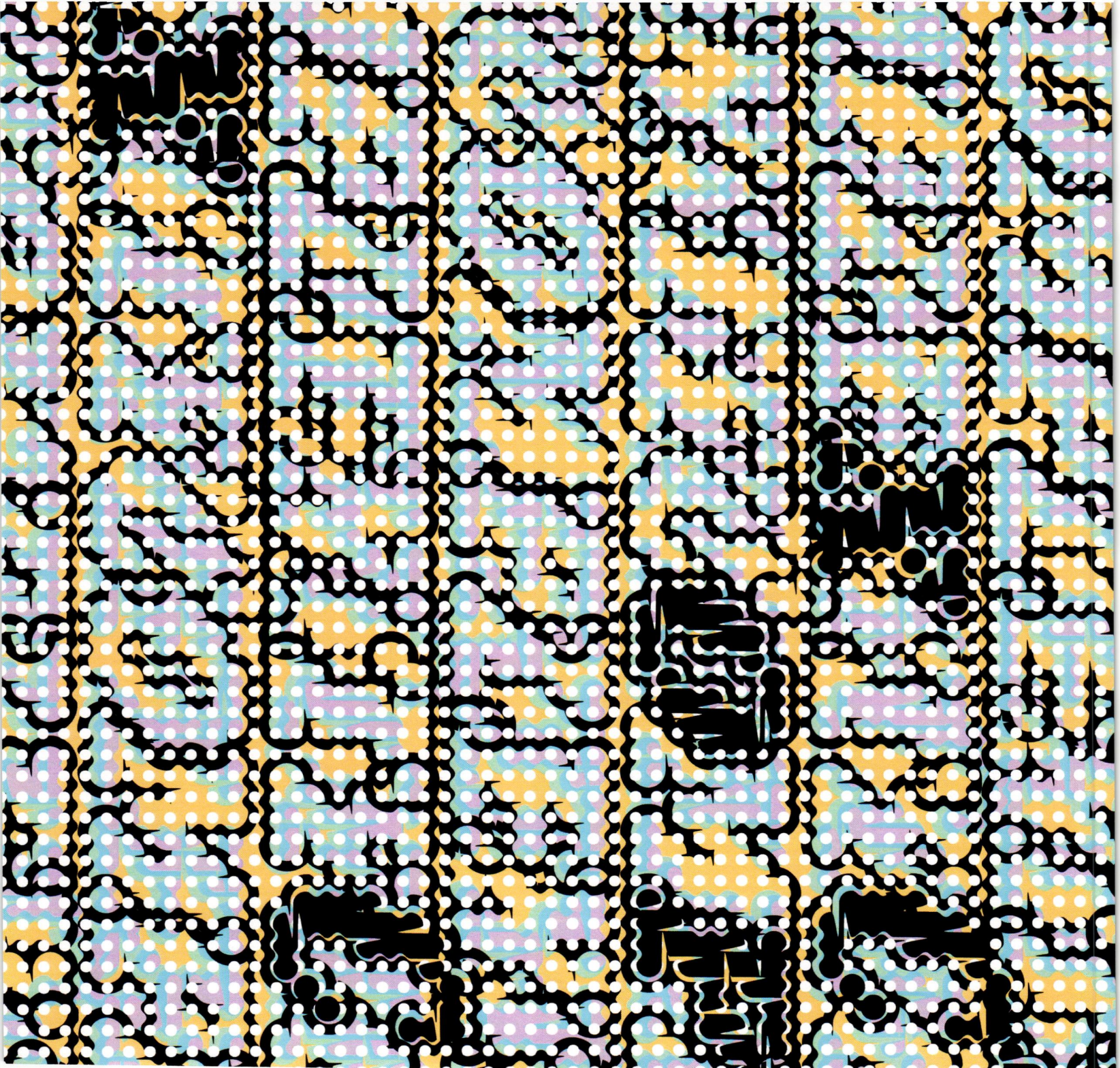
We can peer through the lens of history and recognize economic systems that work and those that do not. Capitalism works, but it needs an update in the outset of AI-guided automation, and more closely intertwined globalization, and a population that will have tripled from 1970 to 2050. Currencies need to be evaluated, and an open, fair, and opportunity-rich playing field needs to be maintained. But, more importantly:

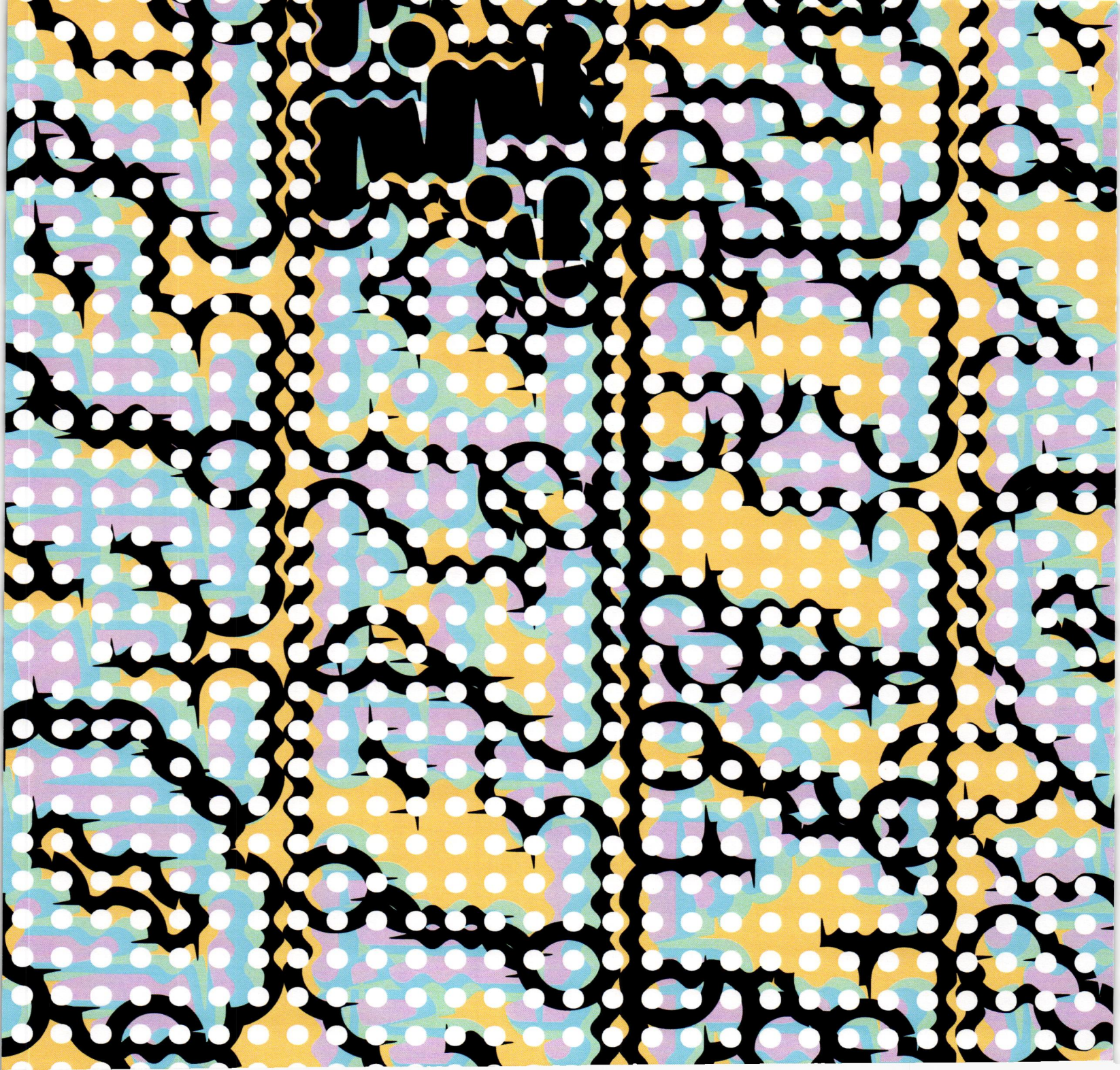
bold, talented designers are needed for the products and services they create, to set the tone of forward progress while ensuring that prosperity, absolute truth, and the best of basic humanity remains intact.



**SET THE TONE
OF FORWARD
PROGRESS WHILE
ENSURING THAT
PROSPERITY,
ABSOLUTE TRUTH,
AND THE BEST
OF BASIC HUMANITY
REMAINS**







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IT IS AN INTERESTING CONCEPT, this concept of Rebellion. It stirs up emotions of righteous indignation, bands us all together under the flag of change, and places us solidly against the forces which oppose us. It has a sense of urgency, a sense of unity, and inspires us to act. **But who, exactly, is this Opposing Force? Against whom—or what—are we so actively raging?**

Without fully identifying and understanding that opposition, it is nearly impossible to stage a successful rebellion.

In the 1960s, Jane Jacobs looked around at the neighborhoods she knew and loved and saw that they were rapidly being replaced by “progressive design” and modernist architectural ideals. She was deeply concerned by the damage it was causing her beloved city. On a more **distressing** level, she was *horrified* by the lack of programmatic comprehension and social insight of the very Designers who were proposing such drastic changes. They were exchanging active streets, bursting with delicious complexity, with planned banality for the sake of modernity. For Jacobs, it was not the social systems or cultural norms for which she reserved her *furor*, it was city planning and design itself against which she rebelled.

Against whom—
or what— are we
so actively
RAGING?



and was the one to ask questions about how and when a city should develop? In order to stage such a rebellion, there are three tactical efforts that must be implemented to accelerate a sustaining adaptation of these new values, and to reestablish the role of design itself as the facilitator of the successful built environment.

REBEL TACTIC ONE: ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS MUST LEARN HOW TO ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS IN ORDER TO GET THE RIGHT ANSWERS.

By actively engaging the end user, and by starting with the question, "What's working here?" instead of, "What's broken? Let me fix it," the Rebel Architect can fully see her surroundings. Architecture is strengthened when partnered with an innovative program that is based on a wide variety of research and input from a mobilized community. By engaging in public discussions that start with affirmative questions, the Rebel Architect is provided insights and opens the possibility of being a true advocate for improvement rather than a transient interloper with "big ideas." The Rebel Architect is part of a larger team of community experts, local leaders, and a broad user group that, together, proposes

to help facilitate these discussions and build positive coalitions; but she must be very careful to see herself as only one member of the larger team. It is when this newly established organism is fully working together that true impact to a community can happen and Design is reestablished as a welcomed solution rather than a disconnected and imposed change.

REBEL TACTIC TWO: ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS MUST SELF-INITIATE AND EXPLORE PROJECTS THAT MITIGATE THE RISK FOR GOVERNING OFFICIALS BY ENSURING THEIR CAPITAL.

Governing officials have an impossibly large say over how our spaces are developed. While they possess a variety of tools (tax incentives, zoning policy, building codes, etc.), many decisions come down to two types of capital they have at their disposal: political capital and actual civic dollars.

In Tactic One, public trust was gained by appreciative inquiry and the proposed project received community support. This convergence of public opinion is "Political Cash" to governing officials and can mitigate the project's risk and, therefore, allow them an easier path toward its endorsement.

The Political Cash gained by having the public put their weight behind a proposal is capital that the governing official does not have to spend to get the project off the ground. Momentum propagated by the public for a project allows the typical players (Investor, Developer, Government) to reduce their risk by backing a project that has already accrued equity: **public enthusiasm and commitment.**

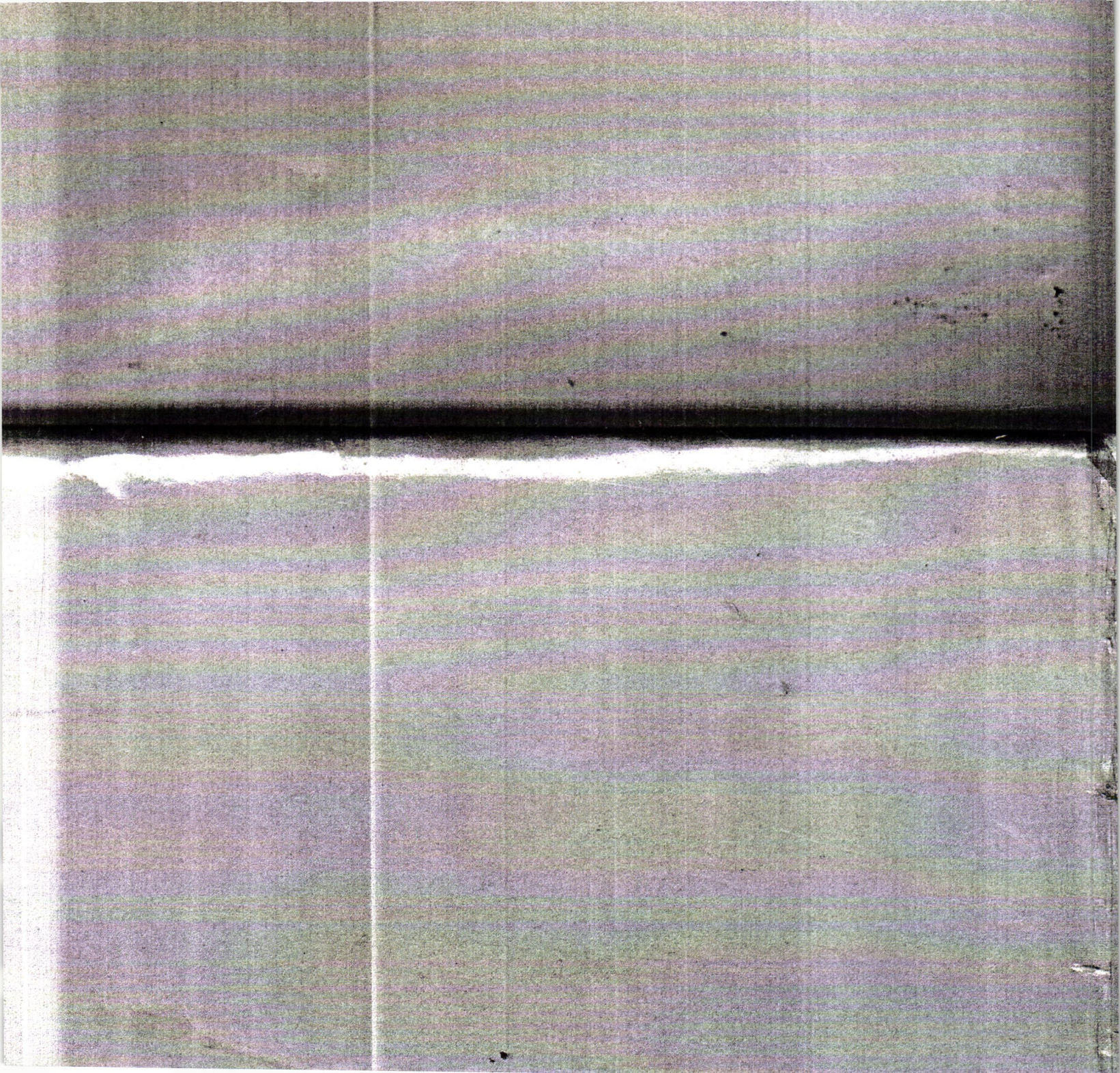
This Political Cash also reduces the risk of ill-spent or misused civic dollars. When the Architect facilitates public discussions and together they create solutions based on the users' ground-level expertise, proposed solutions are much more likely to flourish. Users have already subscribed to the success of the project and have targeted that success at real-world issues. The result is actual dollars being put in areas where they are most needed and civic capital being spent towards the most effective community outcomes.



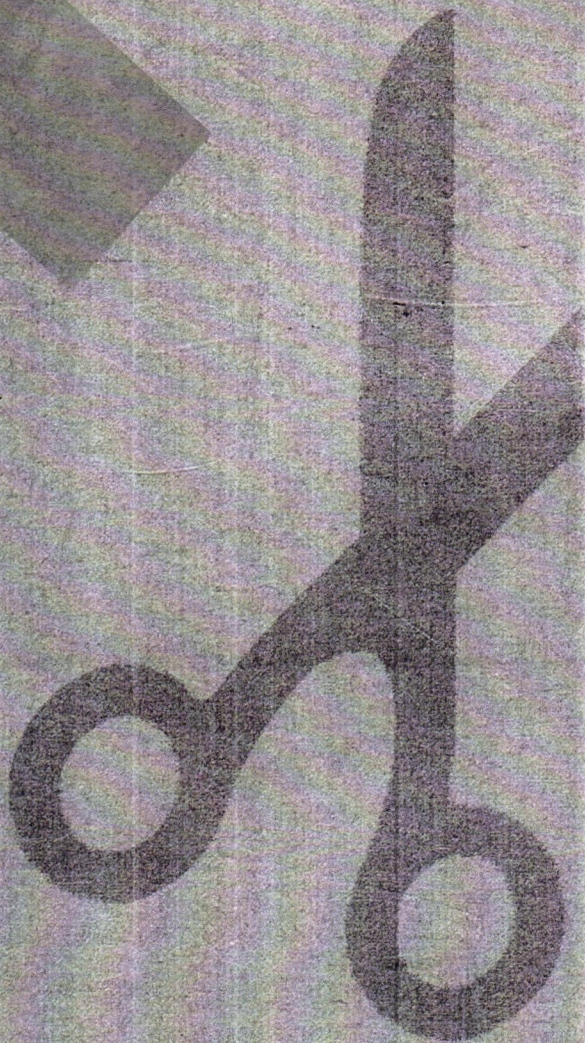
be good for us..." The 1960s was a period of crisis for cities; a time for rebellion. The process by which urban neighborhoods were being changed was as broken and as dangerous as the role of the Designer was misguided.

Today's Rebel Architect must strive to reconnect that which has been socially, technologically, and physically disconnected. By actively engaging her community, the Rebel Architect can facilitate public-led solutions that are empowered by the local users and endorsed by governing officials. This emerging rebellion will succeed if it is led by those brave enough to change design methodologies to maximize the community impact, skillfully reduce risk in the public sphere, and forego ego to allow self-reflection to influence future design over the course of time.

It is an interesting concept, this concept of Rebellion. It requires an understood Opposing Force and identified Tactics for action, but—more importantly—it requires the unification of those who not only see the need but boldly march out to meet it.



This is a
tombstone.



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Special thanks as well to the Publication Campaign Committee led by Steve Schuster, FAIA, (1973) of Clearscapes and David Ramseur, AIA, (1968) of RPA Design. The committee met from 2000 to 2002 and included John Cort, AIA (1967), Ligon Flynn, FAIA, (1959), Don Lee, FAIA, (1961), Wes McClure, FAIA, (1969), and Lloyd Walter, FAIA, (1960).

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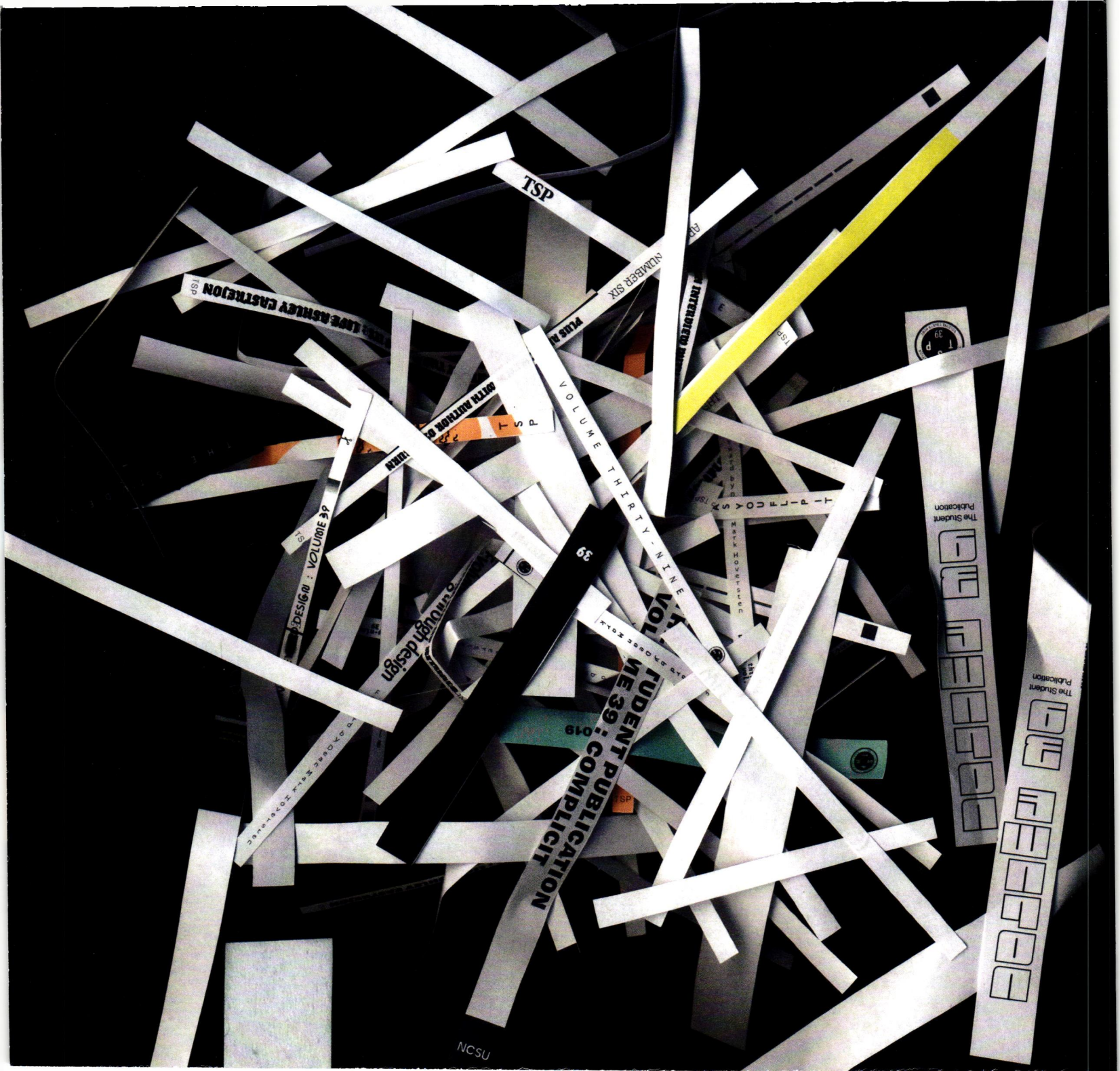
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