# PATCHWORK CULTURE[[1]](#footnote-2)

There is no immateriality.

The brain does not oppose the body, it mirrors it.

The gaps are never empty, they’re neglected.

But also: ‘As we find solutions, we find even more ambitious objectives.’[[2]](#footnote-3)

This time last year, while looking out of Studio Scott’s window, Larry concludes that it’s definitely due to his compliant nature that his boss chose *him* as an assistant. Enough time has passed for him to know that Scott would never tolerate an aggressive web developer whose interest is money and prestige, nor would he ever be able to tolerate a lone coding wolf who’d rather be sniffing eagerly at alternative media spaces where grids melt into transparent shapes, invisible to the naked eye. The reasons for choosing our dear Larry are obvious: an aggressive type would be one too many in the studio, while a wolf could possibly threaten Scott’s own intellectual property.

After many years of being compliant to his boss, Larry finally has started to feel uneasy. Reflecting on a mental image of himself in his private life has confirmed that it’s a bit odd to be given such a personality trait: ‘compliant nature.’ He shuffled through the last three remaining images from his private life. Right there, he realized, *that’s* the core of the problem: he never spends any time outside of the studio. The last image shows a portrait of him, lounging on a sofa on a Saturday night—exhausted; his tiredness blocking any further development of a unique personality trait by which he could recognize himself in an imaginary crowd.

But, he thought to himself, he’s an assistant web developer. It’s not compliance that’s itching his skin, it’s his persistent staying power. He didn’t stop coding since he learned how to code, didn’t even take one day off. By now, he should be experienced enough to know that whatever irritates him is only proof of his endurance. Instead of doubting, he should feel proud.

*But really,* he asked himself, *how come he was never taught how to look away from the screen, how to take a break?* The 20-20-20 rule break, or lunch, or even holidays: they don’t count. Hmm. Larry scratched himself slowly on the head. What does this mean?

He tried to imagine an authentic kind of break, but only bumped into the limitations of his imagination. *Hmm.* As he continued cleaning the code and scrolling down the client’s interface, he realized that all he’s ever done is follow instructions on what to code and how to code it; that his life has been a stage, designed by someone else’s set of time frames. At this point, his sheer incompetence bursted into a diplomatic rage. Although this rage was escalating sloooower than you might think, it escalated further and further.

Hmm. Hmm. You know what’s funny? he thought to himself. In this particular time frame, it’s enormously difficult to tell if his hands are more expensive than his brain. As if … ‘As if how something is assembled is alien to the impulse that created it.’ — Ocean Vuong, *On Earth We*’*re Briefly Gorgeous*.

Imaginary sounds of laughter invaded the studio space. His body sent three notifications: a cold shiver, a sudden wink of an eye, and a knee-jerk.

Fuck it, Larry then decided out loud, and called it a day. He put his computer to sleep, started scanning his physical surroundings. He looked out of the window and saw pitch-black darkness. Envisioning the distance it would take him to get home, it somehow felt really, *really* far away. His body-brain-soul was not aligned. He felt nothing at all.

Before he leaves, he pulls his phone out of his pocket and reloads Facebook on his browser. He had hoped to see red icons, messages, events, invitations, or similar bits that would usually make him feel like a local in town. Maybe, he thinks, he would like to get drunk. But on his phone, only the silence caused by yesterday’s inactivity welcomes him. Zero notifications, zero messages. Irony tickled him to smile and say: *Look how far the interfaces have brought us.* Not far at all indeed.

Instead of rushing home by bike, he decides to walk through the mental blur that lives in his head tonight, walk it off. He wants to think. All by himself. Just think. In the long run, he ponders, his commitment to the machine and detachment from communal practices will be memorable to no one, not even to himself. His memory will fade. It already has. ZipSpace is the only website he remembers building by himself in the last five years. But there were more. For sure there were more. Right?

He sinks a bit deeper. He should have remembered what Weinberg has taught him about the pattern while reading his book all those centuries ago; that was a good warning sign.[[3]](#footnote-4) He sinks even deeper. He understands now that, although he is fueled by world-changing dreams thrust upon him at the art academy, he cannot *actually* change the world. He sinks deeper still. Countless web developers are on a similar mission, and they’re probably technically more well-versed than he is. Even deeper. If he *could* change the world, he’d turn it into a world in which there are no problems, so that he would never have to fix them again. He stops sinking. Go, Larry. Go, go. If he wants an interesting death, he’s going to have to work towards it. He starts swimming. If he wants emotional safety, he’s going to have to exterminate what makes his environment unlovable. Larry reaches the surface, takes a deep breath.

*Fuck it*, he decides for the second time that day.

Fuck WordPress

Fuck SquareSpace

Fuck Cargo

Fuck WebFlow

Fuck Kirby

Fuck Sanity

Fuck StoryBlok

Fuck Content-full

Fuck Strapi

Ever heard of BlockSmith? A software to be produced by Larry’s own brain.

This year, BlockSmith joined the tech market. Compared to Scott’s pretty content management system, BlockSmith focuses on giving more freedom to the users. It’s an online visual editor platform that allows coders and non-coders to build a website. Subscription offers free templates designed by Larry, but the content has to be provided by the users.

To better understand how BlockSmith works, just imagine if real life was like web design. Imagine if things (like opening a door) just stopped working (because there was no software update). Imagine if all people were dressed the same (light-grey suits paired with Converse All Stars). Imagine if things (like framed Matisse paintings) disappeared for no apparent reason, or if things (like coffee) just wouldn’t go where you wanted them to (into a mug). Imagine if you needed complicated tools (like milk syringe) for the simplest tasks (to soak a cornflake). Imagine if nothing (like sand) looks like it was supposed to (instead, it resembles chocolate milk). Oh, yeah*. Oops.* And now, I ask of you, to just imagine, if everything (like an IKEA-BEKANT working desk) simply broke down once it got too popular. What would you do, dear human? That’s right. You’d never put up with it.

That’s why Larry built BlockSmith: so you can make things work exactly the way they’re supposed to. Everything just *works* with BlockSmith—the modern way to build structures for the web.

‘Slow and steady may not win the race, but programming is not a race.’ — Gerald Weinberg, The Psychology of Computer Programming

1. ‘A patchwork culture of short-term memories and missing records, conflicting histories and discontinuous samples, strands of the narrative pulled out of time.’ — Sadie Plant, *Zeros and Ones* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. ‘If the supposed lack of such a central point was once to women’s detriment, it is now for those who thought themselves so soulful who are having to adjust to a reality in which there is no soul, no spirit, no mind, no central system of command in bodies and brains which are not, as a consequence, reduced to a soulless mechanistic device, but instead hum with complexities and speeds way beyond their own comprehension. This is not a brain opposed to the body. The brain is body, extending even to the fingertips, through all the thinking, pulsing, fluctuating chemistries, and virtually interconnected with the matters of other bodies, clothes, keyboards, traffic flows, city streets, data streams. There is no immateriality.’ — Sadie Plant, *Zeros and Ones* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. ‘Though details differ, the pattern is depressingly repetitive: Moving targets. Fluctuating goals. Unrealistic schedules. Missed deadlines. Ballooning costs. Despair. Chaos.’ — Gerald Weinberg, *The Psychology of Computer Programming* [↑](#footnote-ref-4)