



A bouquet of red roses superimposed on a vintage profile of a woman by Linder.

A hanging metal shop sign by Kara Hamilton and Angie Keefer that reads "WHERE WERE WE."

A fax from Paul Elliman that traces the British coastline through handwritten regional sea areas from the BBC's daily Shipping Forecast.

In what is probably the only outbreak of sentimentality in the oeuvre of one of the driest logicians in the history of philosophy, Rudolf Carnap once offered as an example of a "categorical contradiction" the following proposition:

This stone is thinking of Vienna.

In Carnap's mind, this was a case of a sentence that is grammatically well-formed, but is neither true nor false, because it makes no sense: like "this sonata is aquamarine," it tries to apply a predicate to something that belongs to a different category than that to which the predicate refers: "is thinking of" can only refer to sentient beings, just like colors can only refer to visible objects. A hundred years after it was written, however, a sentimental reader of this sentence might instead see it as something completely different: its author, exiled to the United States after the Nazi occupation of Vienna, could indeed have reasons to believe that even stones might still be thinking about it.

Categorical contradiction is also a fundamental motif of many modern and contemporary artworks. It is the premise of much conceptual art, for instance, as well as the animating force behind the found object. However, in one key sense what all artworks share is simply participation in the category of art: they are objects either created or selected to offer a specific kind of aesthetic and/or intellectual experience. As such, viewers of artworks always arrive with some idea of how they are supposed to approach them: not necessarily what questions to ask the work, but what the question should look like. It should look like a question about art.

This principle—that all artworks, no matter how diverse in terms of medium and age, belong to the same ontological category—is precisely what had been radically subverted by *The Martian Museum of Terrestrial Art*, an exhibition curated by Francesco Manacorda and Lydia Yee at the Barbican Centre in London in 2008. The exhibition was based on the conceit that both the arrangement and the explanation of the objects displayed had been carried out by an alien civilization whose only knowledge about contemporary art was what could have been deduced from the objects themselves. In one way, this can be understood as a radical experiment in formal analysis, a way to work seriously against any notion of contemporary art as an obscurely coded field governed by mystification and insider knowledge. In another way it can be seen as a way to make the gesture of saying something about a set of objects without actually engaging with what they say.

This introduction to the collection of The Serving Library is doing both things.<sup>1</sup> The collection itself is doing them, too.

[A piece it once included] was withdrawn after an argument with the artist who made it about the dubious status of the work in relation to the whole, particularly as articulated through

information surrounding the show, i.e. whether the exhibition was presented as a collection of independent pieces, or a single piece comprised of composite parts, as a general group show, or one with an explicit curatorial theme. And by extension, who was being represented, exactly: the individual artists, the group of artists [...], its editor, or [...] its publisher.

This is how a contentious incident was reported in an earlier text about the collection by one of the editors, who explains: "I didn't really have a good answer, or rather I had a non-answer: that the only intention in this respect was to present something—for better or worse—outside any of those designations."

Two photographs, taken from different vantage points, of Paulina Olowska's performance *Bauhaus Yoga*.

Unwitting sister logos for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology by Muriel Cooper and hardcore band Black Flag by Raymond Pettibon.

An upside-down facsimile photograph of an early sketch for the London Underground map by Harry Beck.

An acetate sheet with an example of long division used on an overhead projector during a talk by Perri MacKenzie.

This collection does not only include artworks. However, the contexts in which it has been exhibited, the professional trajectories of the people assembling it, and the ways in which it is displayed jointly conspire for it to be understood in terms of an art collection. The many reasons why this label does not fit are just as relevant to understanding it as the reasons why it does. In art, a "collection" is a set of artworks gathered according to certain guiding criteria, such as their being representative of something—a certain movement or technique, a historical development, a social group. A "collection" is also a set of artworks gathered according to that intersection of personal inclination, geographical proximity, market forces and happenstance that we call taste. Despite sharing a name, the intellectual operation these "collections" invite viewers to perform are diagrammatically opposite. The first kind uses the collection's guiding criteria to understand and contextualize individual works; they appear as parts of a whole. By knowing, say, that a given collection has a focus on unorthodox traditions in the Italian Renaissance, you might be able to better understand the works of Cosmé Tura and his school:

These X are all somehow related to Y.

In the second case, the absence of an explicit criterion for inclusion reverses this intellectual operation, the objects on display functioning as a set of parts whose analogies and similarities might offer clues to what the whole is about:

This Y is somehow related to all these X.

In the first case, the criteria allow viewers to understand the works; in the second case, the works collectively guide viewers towards understanding the criteria behind them.

The artist's decision to withdraw the work from this "collection" was a direct reflection of the ambiguity and confusion between these two operations. The artist's objection was that it wasn't clear to them whether their work was being displayed as the

result of a deduction or the base for an induction. The answer was that it wasn't clear to us either.

However, a “collection” is also simply a set. In mathematical set theory, the word is used in textbooks to skirt around the obvious embarrassment of defining a primitive concept in terms of itself: “a set is a set of objects” not being too promising as the founding definition of a whole discipline.

In set theory, a set can be defined by a criterion for inclusion, called a function (“the set of all odd numbers under 8”; “the set of all the people I drunk-dialed in 2014”) or by a list ( $\{1; 3; 5; 7\}$ ,  $\{\text{Fabio, Natalia, Francesca, ...}\}$ ). In principle, the two methods are equivalent—the difference is only in whether one works from the top down or from the bottom up. This mirrors rather precisely the two operations of collections we saw before—the one defining elements by what they have in common, the second offering a list of elements leaving one to ponder what, if anything, they share.

Curiously enough, the relationship between these two ways of defining a set generated a great deal of ambiguity and confusion in set theory, too, at least in the philosophical inquiries into the way mind and language work. Since the late 19th century, set theory has been used as a formal system to explain the underlying mechanisms through which words and concepts relate to things—“semantics.” In its most basic version, this system would identify every word or expression with the set of things it applies to. “Red” would then refer to the set of all red things; “Vincenzo Latronico” to the set that includes only me, assuming I have no homonyms; “prime numbers” to the set of prime numbers; “the collection of The Serving Library” to the set of objects described in this book; and so on.

A sentence such as “Three objects in the collection of The Serving Library are red” would then be understood as saying that there are exactly three things that those two sets share—or, more precisely, that three things stand in the intersection of the two sets.

This, however, ends up generating bizarre consequences when combined with a foundational principle of the glamorous-sounding Zermelo-Fraenkel formalization of set theory, generally used as a standard, called the axiom of extensionality, which states that if and only if two sets have the same elements, then they are the same set.

$$\forall A \forall B (\forall X (X \in A \iff X \in B) \implies A = B)$$

This axiom is apparently straightforward: the set  $\{1; 3; 5; 7\}$  is identical to the set  $\{3; 5; 1; 7\}$ . However, sets can also be identified with their inclusion criteria—their functions; this would imply that, in case two functions identify the same set, they are the same. However, consider the previous example—“Vincenzo Latronico” being the set that includes only me. Coincidentally, also “Human males writing in the dining room at the Performing Arts Forum in Saint-Erme-Outre-et-Ramecourt, France, on August 19th 2020, at 11:38 local time” is the set that includes only me. The axiom of extensionality thus stipulates that the two expressions are identical, interchangeable, synonymous.

There is a sense in which this is true, as they both refer to me, but many in which they don't. Those two expressions (and countless others, such as “the owner of a VW van with a MCBO100 German plate”) do refer to the same thing,

but convey profoundly different information about it. In order to grapple with the discrepancy, philosophers of language have coined the notion of “intension”: if the “extension” of a given term is the set of objects it denotes, the “intension” is the way in which that extension is determined. The vagueness and arbitrariness of all this (what is a *way*?) engendered a dispute—between so-called “intensionalists” and “extensionalists”—whose dying gasps can be heard to this day in remote philosophy departments.

Another example might help show why this is relevant here. “Prime numbers” denotes the set of numbers that admit no integer factor except 1 and themselves, which we know to be  $\{1; 3; 5; 7; 11; \dots\}$  all the way to countable infinity. Prime numbers have been studied for millennia, and theorems about them—that is, the discovery of the properties that characterize all and only prime numbers—are a crucial part of pure mathematics. Take, for instance a theorem on the factorial of prime numbers, first stated around the year 1000 by Arab mathematician Asan Ibn al-Haytham, that for the vagaries of Eurocentric history is known today as Wilson's theorem.

The proof of Wilson's theorem amounts to the demonstration that its statement identifies exactly the set of prime numbers, just like our initial definition of them as numbers that can only be divided by one and themselves. Following the axiom of extensionality, this would imply that these two concepts (our initial definition, and Wilson's theorem) are synonymous, interchangeable. But the discovery of this synonymy, far from being trivial, has taken several centuries of mathematical research.

This is the very stuff number theory is made of: the study of how and why a certain collection of objects happens to share different properties, or how apparently different properties characterize exactly the same collection of objects.

We're back to “collection,” because the problem of the relations between the properties that can be identified as shared by a given group of objects is precisely the problem the artist who withdrew their work from this collection raised, the problem I have been dancing around in this introduction without trying to solve.

The juxtaposed versions of what appear to be proportionally-enlarged scans of original pages from Stéphane Mallarmé's seminal 1897 poem “Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard” [A throw of the dice will never abolish chance] and Marcel Broodthaers' 1969 abstracted and/or censored version of the same, both labeled “Courtesy of Seth Price.”

A double-page spread headed “Money / History” from the 1971 *Whole Earth Catalog* that details the publication's financial accounts.

In “Futures,” an essay published in issue #7 of *Bulletins of The Serving Library*, Angie Keefer writes about the museum job she had during college:

I wound up underground, in the basement woodshop beneath the exhibition galleries, alone with one of [Duchamp's] ready-mades—the snow shovel—*In Advance of the Broken Arm*. I was to outfit a shipping crate in made-to-measure foam so as to safely send the shovel somewhere. While this was

not an especially interesting job in terms of the labor involved, three long afternoons with *In Advance of the Broken Arm* did expand the scope of my mental Duchamp to encompass the patently obvious: what had registered primarily as a disembodied idea, transmitted through images and texts in books and magazines, was indeed a thing. No “as-if” attached to the task of packing it. I was not performing an absurd and rather boring piece of theater. I was working for an hourly wage. And all of this was supposed to be somewhat beside the point.

The property shared by most objects in this collection is that they have appeared in the pages of the journal family *Dot Dot Dot*, *Bulletins of The Serving Library*, and *The Serving Library Annual*. But beyond that, the very absence of recognizable visual ties between the objects forces a curious onlooker to make a “close reading,” towards their own personal disambiguation. This generative gesture embodies the collection’s fundamental reminder: meaning proliferates within and around any singular object if interrogated with enough attention. No surprise, then, that the collection has been consistently used as a kind of 3-d PowerPoint presentation during workshops and seminars—as a toolbox for teaching.

However, in any given collection of objects one can also identify shared properties that happen to be trivial. For instance, all the objects in this book have at some point existed in a storage space in Liverpool; they are all physical objects; they are all worth less than a yacht. Early exhibitions of the collection were a means of upending the usual hierarchy between text and image in the journals—the former being preponderant and elaborately typeset while the latter, partially because of practical constraints, were rarer and often of poor quality. In our model, this is a property that can be derived a priori from the initial criterion for inclusion (having appeared in the journals).

I believe the passing of time has made this property trivial. In 2004 there were no social media; phones didn’t have cameras; Frieze had just closed its very first UK fair; Donald Trump was starting the very first season of *The Apprentice*; packs of velociraptors roamed the streets at night. Advances in printing, the massive influx of fashion advertising into the art publishing sector, a vertiginous financialization of the art market and the radical changes technology has brought to our habits of mind all allow images, today, to fend off well enough for themselves. Text, meanwhile, is afforded less and less space, pushed aside by the stream of increasingly visual matter that is curiously still referred to as “art discourse.” The publication behind this collection was initially biannual, then became annual a few years ago. My personal hope is that in the future our publishing schedule will keep on doubling every two years: the next issue would come out in 2024, the following one in 2032, and our glorious 20th number would hit the shelves in 2080—assuming shelves still exist.

If a property can become trivial with time, another can become relevant; and what has happened to text over the past two decades seems to point somewhere in this direction. While the contents of *Dot Dot Dot*, *Bulletins* and the *Annual* have varied widely in topic and form, they all share the same temperament, or something akin to a family resemblance. They are rather long; they often deal with abstruse topics with an almost awkward degree of specificity; they try to deliberately transgress boundaries between disciplines, not so much as looters (a specialist in discipline A applying concepts from discipline B), but rather as smugglers or bearers of gifts (a specialist in

discipline B bringing their skillz elsewhere); they share a dry, abstract humor that might be correctly characterized—both as praise and as insult—as “college professor’s.” They require from their readers a higher than average attention and time.

In what would to a certain extent be a typical gesture within this approach, this is the moment in which the text wraps itself into quotes and turns meta, becoming the set of itself, since of course all of the above is true of the present introduction, too. Indeed, the typeface you are looking at is called Meta-The-Difference-Between-The-Two-Font.

An angular plant and its background collaged by Frances Stark using fragments from a color proof of some of the objects in this collection.

Jason Fulford’s C-Print of a Polaroid of an LP and a Polaroid of the LP that depicts German singer-songwriter Ulrich Roski four times.

Philomene Pirecki’s Grey Painting: Text Version 2, whose palette of primary colors combine to form its muddy frame.

There is an obvious sense in which many of these objects participate in the family resemblance between the texts they have in common—appearing either as family members proper, or as the family’s therapists, jesters, teachers, pets, gods. Those of them which are coded as artworks share the logical clarity, formal simplicity, and tongue-in-cheek humor of a bookish approach to conceptual art that flourished around the turn of the millennium. Those of them which are not often invite the viewer to a similar exercise in order to peel their separate layers or to understand their subtle irony. Rather paradoxically—this being a collection of objects whose alleged common trait is their having been printed as illustrations—none of them makes for an immediately compelling, visually striking image. They want you to look closer or to look twice. This is precisely the opposite of the images that come across as most impactful on a smartphone’s small screen. Makers of those images know that people today never look closer, never look twice.

This, I think, could be the key to what I’m looking for here—which is the interpretation of someone whose experience of this collection is much closer to that of an affectionate viewer than to its originator. What these objects share is an approach to viewing, to looking for meaning in an object, that they seem to invite, or to offer a reference library for. Such an approach now appears to have been specific of a certain time—a time in which our understanding of “meanings” was informed by the Internet as a hypertextual utopia as much as by the fear of the image-based corporate Battle Royale that it was about to become. This approach includes a loving mistrust of images; a fondness for the methods of Western modernism combined with a drastic disillusionment as to the purported validity and morality of the results they have yielded;<sup>2</sup> a tendency to “favor the oblique over the categorical, the indirect over the blatantly transparent.” This last quote, in my mind, was from “Dispersion,” a 2002 essay by Seth Price which is informed by pretty much the same approach. Curiously enough, I could not find it to double-check it—either there or anywhere else in his writings. In the aptly named “Teen Image,” from 2009, I found this instead:

Art is sometimes taken to be a kind of seismograph that registers the effects of cultural change. In this view, art's objects and gestures yield distanced reflection and insight: from the frenzy, a distillation. But the term "ritualized unknowing," used above in reference to the Internet, could also describe a response to the banal condition of trying to understand what's happening that one finds in art discourse, which seeks to explain how art explains, to show how art shows, to suggest what art is trying to suggest.

Cover: Linder, *Scarlet Else*, 2020, lithographic print, 24.3 × 35.3 cm

There is a paradox in the very attempt to understand an unfamiliar art practice, which today is usually initiated through the medium of two-dimensional or screen-based images. Initially you grapple with a nebulous apparition in your mind's eye, a suspicion that something hovers beyond with no name forthcoming, but this sense of looming energies and meaning often shrinks when you finally inspect the actual artworks, which reveal themselves to consist of mere objects or gestures, as do all artworks. No matter how powerful the work, you're tempted to say: "But this is just...." Just an object, just a gesture. It would be a mistake, though, to think that your disillusionment upon scrutinizing the "actual" art is a bad thing. A gap has surely opened in your experience of the work, but art depends on this split between the fragile interiority of speculation and the more public and bodily activity of looking, which partakes of space. Your first impression, rare and valuable as it is, is only richer for the betrayal.

A silkscreen frame made by Stuart Bailey hung back-to-front with an old Esperanto motto, "Logika, Neutrala, Facila" [Logical, Neutral, Easy].

\*

## NOTES

1. There is a biographical reason for this. The objects in this collection have been assembled over almost two decades as part of the making of *Dot Dot Dot*, then *Bulletins of The Serving Library*, then *The Serving Library Annual*. The editorial group has fluctuated over the years. Stuart Bailey and Peter Bil'ak were *Dot Dot Dot*'s main editors from 2000 until 2006—which is around the time that this collection was first conceived and installed (about 15 items in Tallinn, Estonia). David Reinfurt then replaced Peter as co-editor until the final, 20th issue in 2010. Stuart, David and Angie Keefer founded *Bulletins of The Serving Library* in a similar but expanded vein, and with a digital bias. Francesca Bertolotti-Bailey came on board in 2016, just prior to the journal's deceleration into *The Serving Library Annual*. Angie left in 2017, and I joined a year later. As the most recent addition, I have thus been called upon to write about something that I am both part of and that predates me, a tree I prune regularly without ever having seen its trunk.

2. This, of course, doesn't mean it is exempt from them. Informed and guided by the discourse around Western modernism, this collection—and to a large extent this publication—is a mirror of its own flaws and blind spots, and over the years it has displayed them in egregious ways, its platform reflecting to a disturbing extent the preponderance of cis het able white males in the European, colonial modernist canon.

## CAMOUFLAGED SHIP IN DRY DOCK

Edward Wadsworth, woodcut, 1918 (lithographic book proof, 1974), 51.2 × 41.2 cm

Now see this, dear reader, imagine the scene:  
Of a submarine hunting the sea.  
A brain and two eyes inside spy through a viewer,  
Thinks: down here, ze ships can't see me!

All it takes is one look, and doing some sums  
Tells me where and how fast the ship's going.  
Launch a torpedo to meet when it comes,  
In bitz the güt ship be a-blowing.

But what if Heinrich was unable to fathom how  
A boat was a-coming or going?  
Ist starboard port when stern becomes bow?  
Mein Gott! Sums have no way of knowing.

The ship that he saw, yet did not, had been Dazzled.  
Camo-, but not, stalled his thinking.  
Two hundred + ships, painted starboard + port  
= Thousands were saved from a sinking.

See — confusion has function before it is measured.  
Brown cows lazy dogs in equation.  
And what we can't fathom should therefore be treasured.  
Look-stopping is good on occasion.

— “These Woodcuts Could Safeguard a Nation!,”  
Will Holder, *Dot Dot Dot* #9, 2004

CAMOUFLAGED SHIP IN DRY DOCK



## ISOTYPE CHARTS FROM ATLAS: SOCIETY AND ECONOMY

Otto Neurath, 1930, (2 facsimile prints, 2008),  
each 41 × 51.5 cm

On the left-hand page she has written a series of numbers. This is the raw data, the code. On the right-hand page she makes a series of symbols that translate the statistics into pictures. This is the interface. So the relationship between the data and Isotype is similar to the relationship between the code you would see if you cursoried to "view source" on any web page and what you see on the interface of that web page.

Because Isotype converted digital information into pictures, it provided us with a structure of visualization that encouraged a very contemporary mode of attention; it is through visual technologies such as Isotype that we learned to "browse." It is the structural logic of Isotype as a form of filtering software that engenders a particular technology of looking which we take with us every time we surf the web or flick through a magazine. But, of course, something as slippery as a "mode of attention" isn't as easy to illustrate as a pictogram, even if its implications are more profound.

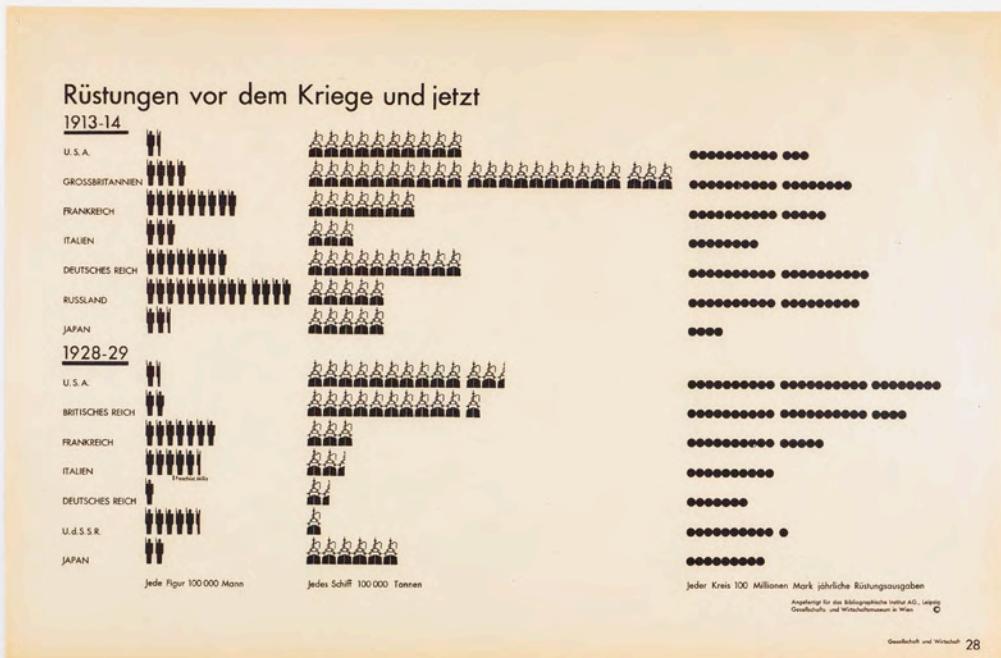
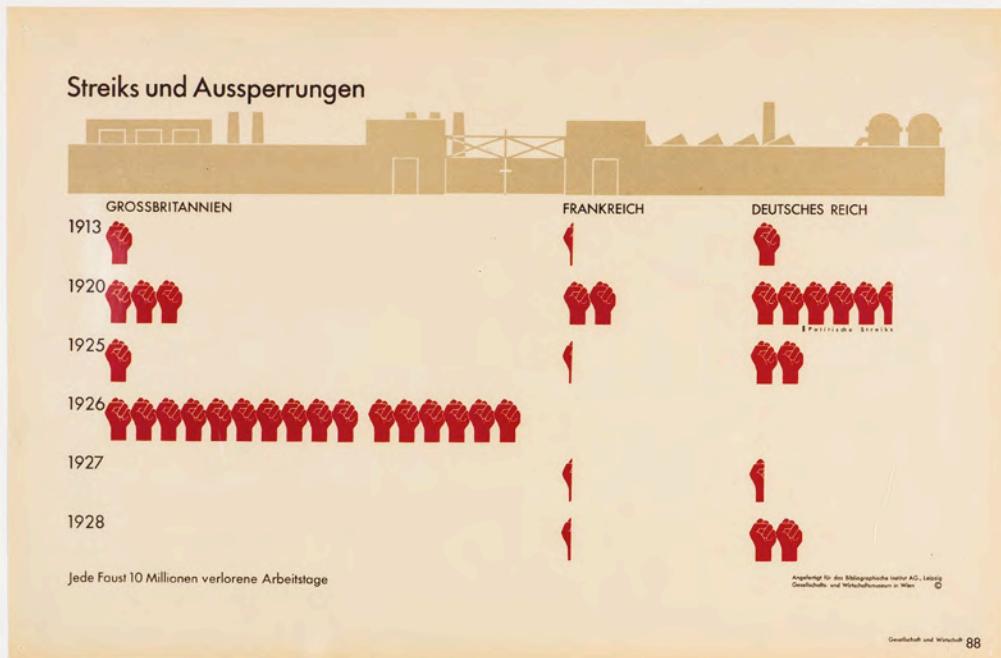
Isotype from its inception follows the logic of the code that creates it—it is serial, it forms patterns, it creates templates, it is composed of elements that are interchangeable. It was this principle, for instance, that allowed for the production of 500 versions of the exhibition of tuberculosis to be exhibited in every major town in the USA (1936), and also allowed for the possibility to reconfigure different elements taken from a data-base of images that accumulated over time. For us, the logic of Isotype exceeds its technology, and exceeds the historical circumstances that produced it—it enters into us and changes the way we look at things. [...]

If Isotype, Basic English and Orlitz's library cataloging system (which is still used today) can be understood as software they carry with them the pitfalls of software: software directs the flow of knowledge—what can and cannot be said and what can and can not be asked. For instance, the Frequently Asked Questions on a web site are often the only questions one can ask.

But I would suggest that Isotype invites us to think outside of the existing template, and raises issues which are the current concern of the open source community: what questions should we ask of our world and what technologies should be employed which are appropriate to those questions? These are concerns that Isotype took seriously in order to increase "the sum-total of human happiness."

—“Like Sailors on the Open Sea,” Steve Rushton,  
*Dot Dot Dot* #14, 2007

## ISOTYPE CHARTS FROM ATLAS: SOCIETY AND ECONOMY



## SKETCH FOR THE LONDON UNDERGROUND MAP

Harry Beck, c.1930, (photographic print, 2004), 35 × 46.5 cm

Harry Beck's London Underground diagram has been the subject of books, television programs, artworks and tourist souvenirs. But none of these confirmed the map's status as an icon of graphic modernism more convincingly than when a famous early sketch for the design was shown upside down at London's Victoria & Albert Museum. Here, the error suggested, was a British abstraction to rival that of Mondrian or Malevich for incomprehensible beauty, and still get you home in time for tea.

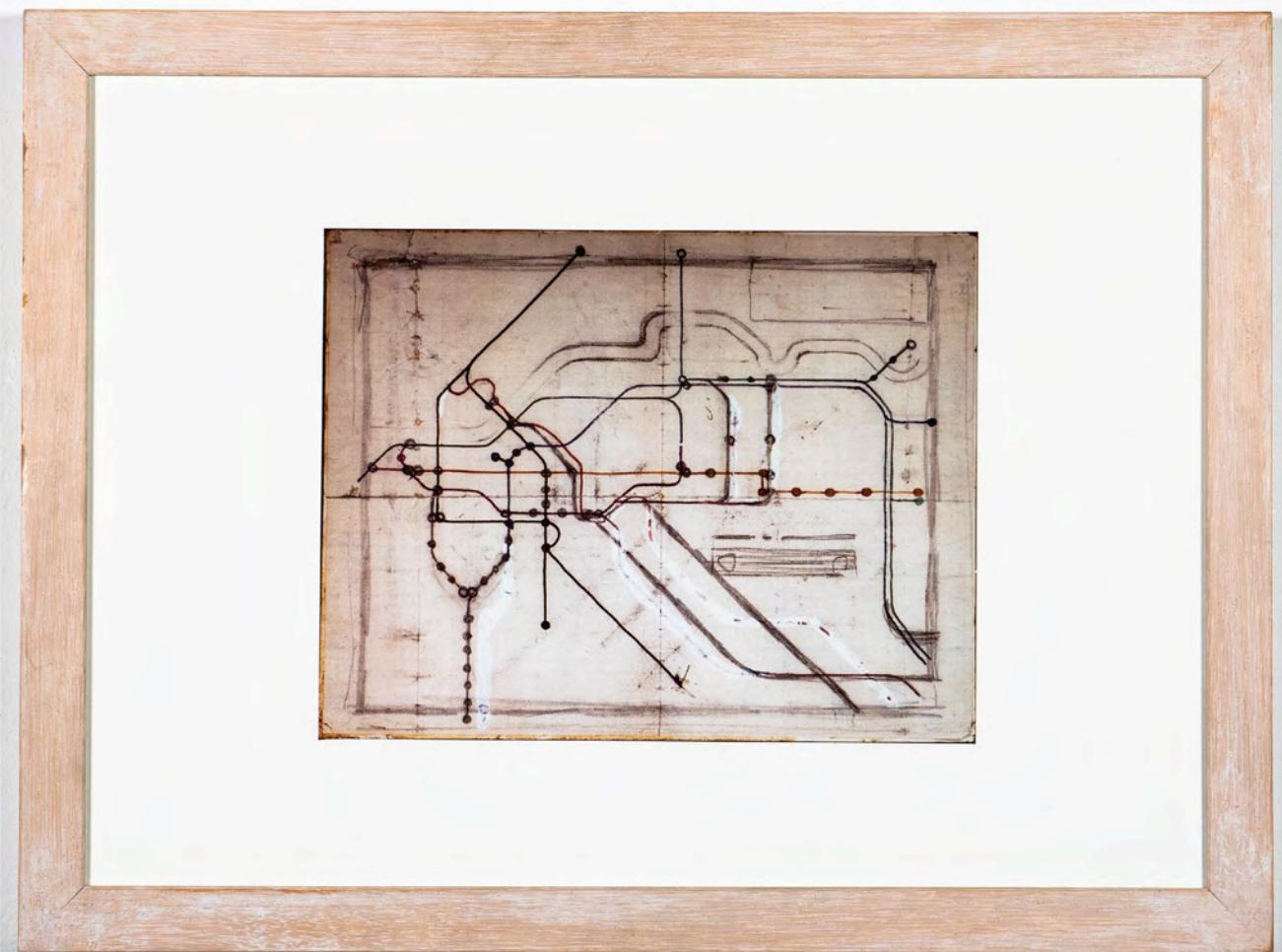
It was this combination of the functional and the abstract that prompted historian Eric Hobsbawm to refer to Beck's map as "the most original work of avant-garde art in Britain between the wars." And here in Britain we do like things to serve a purpose. Especially when what we see doesn't make complete sense. Even a deteriorating London Underground seems acceptable, more authentic in its fulfilment of a Victorian work ethic.

Showing the diagram upside down doesn't necessarily align it with Mondrian. A mistake is a mistake, and an upside down map also conjures an image of technical staff fumbling with the instruction manual, unable to work out which piece goes where. [...]

As it happens, the V&A may have been following a convention accidentally set by Ken Garland, author of the first substantial writing on Beck's work. Alongside his essay, published in 1969, the sketch was inserted, by a genuine production error, upside down. Looking at it now though, with both shock and aftershock or British modernism cooled, the implications of an upside down version have also changed: the diagram turned London inside out, suburbanized its centers and threatens to leave future inhabitants stranded, *without music, without geography*. Why not show it the wrong way round?

—“City Turned Upside Down,” Paul Elliman, *Dot Dot Dot* #8, 2004

SKETCH FOR THE LONDON UNDERGROUND MAP



## OPENING PAGE OF THE FIRST U.S. EDITION OF JAMES JOYCE'S ULYSSES

Ernst Reichl, 1934, (this page from an unknown edition),  
30.5 × 23.5 cm

It's [...] one of several instances in the novel when attention is drawn to letters themselves, that is, to the raw material of language [...].

In "Joyce's forest of symbols," the critic Guy Davenport suggests that words in *Ulysses* can be scrutinized for what is called the "Kells effect," which he defines as "the symbolic content of illuminated lettering serving a larger purpose than its decoration of geometry, imps, and signs." For instance, the original connotations of the first two words of the novel—"stately" is an adjective for kings, and "plump" is for plebeians—encapsulate the conflicts in the opening chapter. At the same time, the last word of the novel, "yes," is contained within the first, "stately." Thus prominent letterforms, such as those at the beginning or at the end of a chapter, can serve a larger thematic and structural purpose within the book.

— "A Die with 26 Faces," Louis Lüthi, *Bulletins of The Serving Library* #3, 2012



## RANDOM PAGE FROM A MILLION RANDOM DIGITS (WITH 100,000 NORMAL DEVIATES)

RAND Corporation, 1955 (this page from the 1966 edition),  
35 × 27.5 cm

Just after World War II, the RAND Corporation was quietly working on a massive book of numbers. *A Million Random Digits (With 100,000 Normal Deviates)* was published by The Free Press in 1955 after almost ten years of meticulous production. The volume is comprised of page after page of numbers—mathematical tables filled with random digits. (A typical page (picked at random) from the 1966 printing is reproduced on the cover of this bulletin.) The random number bible has passed through three editions, multiple printings, and is currently available as both a soft format paperback book and as a text data file downloadable directly from RAND. [...]

Producing a random digit is complex. To make the tables in *A Million Random Digits*, RAND engineers created an electronic roulette wheel with 32 possible values by measuring the decay of a radioactive molecule gated by a constant frequency pulse. These regular electric signals (either on or off, 100,000 times a second for 10 seconds) were run through a five digit binary counter to produce a 5-bit number with 32 possible values. The binary number was converted to decimal and only the final digit was retained to create the 1,000,000 random digits. These values were fed into an IBM punch machine to produce 20,000 computer punch cards with 50 digits each. (Punch cards were then the only practical way to both store and input information into a digital computer.) However, when analyzing this first attempt, RAND engineers detected a bias. Employing a standard statistical goodness-of-fit test to measure the data's conformity to a bell shaped or "normal" curve, the sampled numbers did not match closely enough to the normal distribution of values which would indicate purely random digits. Each number was added modulo 10 (divide by 10 and use only the remainder) to the corresponding digit on the previous card to yield a new set of random values with an almost perfectly normal distribution. Random digit tables were then printed on an IBM 856 Cardatype and reproduced as pages for the book. Proofreading was redundant given the nature of the information.

— “A Million Random Digits,” David Reinfurt, *Bulletins of The Serving Library* #3, 2012

TABLE OF RANDOM DIGITS

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13300	71697	84395	91705	58188	67452	80847	71128	46973	15992	97747
13301	35739	01715	66192	27218	74026	19270	24706	08000	69662	18064
13302	79403	11945	10260	53954	59918	73014	09431	33324	55821	32309
13303	43287	62243	35804	35245	84321	72384	00122	64516	27241	95803
13304	27301	52127	04924	45355	69884	63401	27852	68143	26367	15500
13305	73808	13547	94767	16877	99037	23335	04648	25835	16787	40873
13306	96818	50168	99701	04633	62496	93835	09270	37256	77615	10454
13307	16060	57724	82092	50495	41834	14154	21618	00999	78680	73308
13308	27046	25046	87192	15077	00268	94098	65690	39876	62144	87435
13309	48505	20660	90682	59018	90236	03236	86001	05408	36975	68606
13310	59033	86705	65910	58500	27531	79960	35790	25009	95852	89419
13311	38037	61410	60515	44512	14600	67952	32878	27261	30453	16630
13312	31996	49725	10172	77184	27277	71306	42951	59626	99940	59098
13313	12668	91233	88787	59535	49642	84125	05679	42127	15690	00370
13314	19160	29346	93245	84815	11543	07769	48415	91665	42586	80304
13315	21637	27788	51842	38511	03525	60016	34857	90686	39202	91632
13316	51113	23525	64349	56773	17907	37489	44219	87051	21017	50955
13317	96047	45107	37319	31059	40345	65414	82007	45383	21791	26460
13318	52531	72695	12560	09520	21023	41753	12336	38114	44918	82150
13319	52891	45252	02577	80275	11178	68593	78207	35104	21405	46166
13320	81988	90968	54114	92531	98125	90247	42142	22189	94485	14363
13321	76282	11043	02218	35497	83924	01429	64932	66931	29280	52849
13322	28702	51106	89848	02546	52539	17681	00262	35208	16332	65716
13323	74963	59244	74394	30052	37935	68531	41029	60917	79866	26512
13324	25123	86332	59738	55438	56053	58803	12775	72656	18529	25090
13325	01027	79775	37666	16816	71697	99021	24676	25916	58558	76849
13326	76378	25003	59725	66505	41450	58874	35674	75313	98516	52018
13327	82302	38174	73793	13159	21180	38425	81352	11464	01761	32357
13328	86443	56206	90218	98785	92430	33004	54651	11512	66613	48970
13329	30224	37414	02926	45499	91692	04396	04984	16874	75919	17504
13330	26539	47073	29754	00982	44265	62551	10824	86463	19247	65690
13331	03643	53529	11430	95645	72943	24475	76795	71817	75517	63344
13332	68498	69345	46554	09903	19054	57996	65323	27796	93981	74804
13333	25031	35246	85213	06681	53858	28752	02218	02726	52187	44077
13334	51664	98609	48290	20914	02946	59144	34025	07166	62568	65912
13335	59570	09001	40484	77932	97256	38756	23982	09885	00896	50389
13336	01925	11981	42809	09625	70639	02505	00711	91376	70697	01669
13337	73148	44748	61150	43328	48033	77415	83811	55755	42436	84540
13338	98851	61614	07571	37791	80094	62994	88640	79680	82716	23483
13339	10168	38203	18288	86384	36804	01865	83827	57148	16850	81053
13340	31050	73000	52752	49807	27295	57224	50371	97555	20876	46263
13341	46155	91045	03033	28469	40065	09597	05488	65163	18308	06694
13342	38560	02861	16097	25428	38168	20369	63582	54261	11156	17843
13343	90666	06547	05117	13076	85568	10835	23817	07933	28951	03939
13344	64122	27975	46798	92347	52031	98236	26392	37653	59724	49577
13345	70100	58026	34226	36441	62150	18683	69024	36681	29199	84694
13346	96245	22660	22274	16722	30621	30035	25347	78369	28181	97784
13347	89627	99474	65841	87477	03964	01170	65620	39097	97428	96616
13348	56832	55686	65531	59171	01300	52802	91762	40164	82533	47894
13349	50240	04386	14679	12478	24005	83447	64196	84605	33379	41740

## POSTER FOR PFÄFFERLI+HUBER PHARMACEUTICALS

Ernst Bettler, 1959, silkscreen print, 154 × 112.3 cm

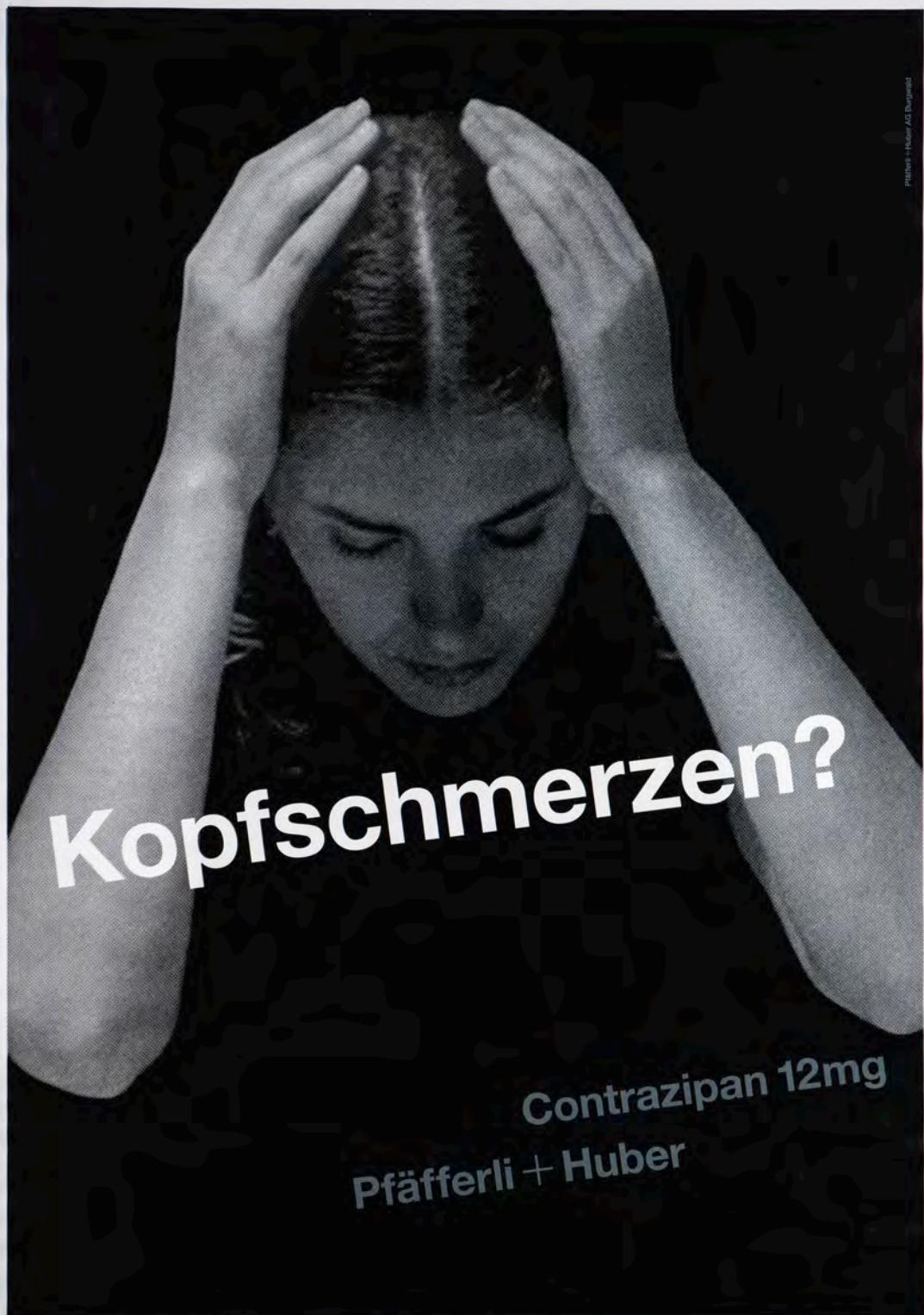
In late 1958 Bettler, now twenty-nine, was commissioned by Burgwald-based pharmaceuticals manufacturer Pfäfferli+Huber AG to design a running series of posters celebrating the company's fiftieth anniversary. He was already aware of reports concerning P+H's involvement in testing carried out on prisoners in concentration camps less than fifteen years before, and when the telephone call came, was about to tell this would-be client to "... go to hell. But fortunately the wheels in the brain were faster back then [...]. In that split of a second I had the feeling that I could do some real damage."

Bettler accepted the commission—a decision which cost him several left-wing friends. "But I knew I could win them back later. The agony was biding my time. When I said yes to the job, I had no idea how subversion could work with a large client who would check everything over and over. The first set of posters gave P+H exactly what they wanted: a new style of design."

Early the following year a second set of posters were presented, one by one over a series of meetings, for the client's approval. Only after they had been printed did Bettler's masterplan come to fruition: "The beauty of it was that, taken alone, each poster was utterly inoffensive. But you must remember that everything has a *Zusammenhang*; a context. These posters would be seen together in horizontal rows. And I was very careful with my briefing of the bill stickers."

On hundreds of sites around Burgwald and neighboring Sumisdorf, the posters appeared in fours. In the first a clowning child's body made an "N"; in the second a woman's head was bowed inside the "A"-shaped triangle of her forearms. An old man's contortions in the third poster ("that took forever to shoot") sketched a "Z." No prizes for guessing that the girl in the final plakat stood defiantly still, her almost silhouetted profile as stiff as, well, a letter "I," for example.

—“‘I’m Only a Designer’: the Double Life of Ernst Bettler,”  
Christopher Wilson, *Dot Dot Dot* #2, 2001



Kopfschmerzen?

Contrazipan 12mg  
Pfäfferli + Huber

## CUTTING FROM AN ARTICLE ON NORMAN POTTER'S PENTON KITCHEN

c. 1961, 18 × 19 cm

The kitchen was commissioned by architect Richard Penton for his Victorian house in Islington, north London. It was installed as a room-within-a-room, imposing its modernism in the midst of decorative cornicing and a Georgian-style fireplace complete with fluting, ionic capitals and a frieze. The *Observer* article describes it as "a new kind of kitchen landscape." [...]

My preconception of the kitchen is instantly undermined. Despite years of anticipation, I have arrived in the presence of this artifact without appreciating an elementary reality of it. The Penton kitchen is \*highly colored.\* [...]

The wood itself is various. The dominant material is not the presumptive blond ply but a rich mahogany. This makes the volumes visually heavier than the photographs suggest. There are small panels color-coding various electrical switches with yellow and black formica. And the blue. Several large cupboards and one smaller are faced in the primary blue formica, still clean and bright. Looking for explanation, I see the resemblance to the blue trim of the water heater. They are closely matched, but it hardly seems significant. Maybe Potter arrived at the blue in relation to some aspect of the interior in Islington. Or it might have been chosen for purely metaphysical reasons. It is probably unknowable now.

— “Now in Color,” James Langdon, *Bulletins of The Serving Library* #11, 2016



CUTTING FROM AN ARTICLE ON NORMAN POTTER'S PENTON KITCHEN



## LOGO FOR MIT PRESS / LOGO FOR BLACK FLAG

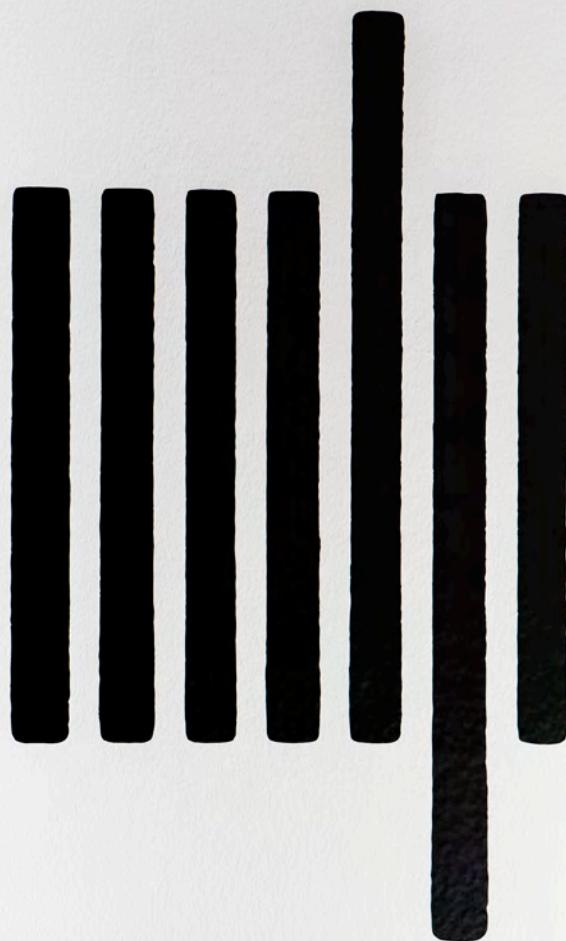
Muriel Cooper, 1965 / Raymond Pettibon, 1978, vinyl,  
dimensions variable

Set side-by-side, the MIT Press logo and the Black Flag bars bear a formal resemblance that, I like to think, is not simply coincidental. Or, rather, I want to suggest that the homology between the two sets up a kind of vibration that can begin to point us in a number of directions simultaneously. [...]

If we allow, for a moment, the proximity of the Black Flag bars and MIT Press logo to lead us simultaneously backward to the Bauhaus and forward, toward the complex, networked terrains explored by Cooper at the Visible Language Workshop, the connections I have been making between the DIY tactics of early American hardcore and early modernist abstraction will, hopefully, become more clear [...] for Cooper, as well as the avant-garde of the early 1920s and American hardcore of the early 1980s, the rhizomatic or networked logic of abstraction makes possible a set of mobile relationships, temporary alliances and hybrid forms that continue to be vital and productive.

— “Graphics Incognito,” Mark Owens, *Dot Dot Dot* #12, 2006

LOGO FOR MIT PRESS / LOGO FOR BLACK FLAG



FURTHUR LSD BLOTTER ART / SEX PISTOLS' PRETTY VACANT 7" SINGLE SLEEVE

Unknown, c. 1967 / Jamie Reid, 1977, 41.5 × 51.5 cm

Original acid blotter artwork of Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters' magic bus [...] / Reversed, negative detail of back cover artwork of Sex Pistols' *Pretty Vacant* single [...]

– “Equation for a Composite Design (1): Two Ideologies,”  
Stuart Bailey, *Dot Dot Dot* #8, 2004

FURTHUR LSD BLOTTER ART / SEX PISTOLS' PRETTY VACANT 7" SINGLE SLEEVE



No. 12 (92), 1967, 35.8 × 28.5 cm

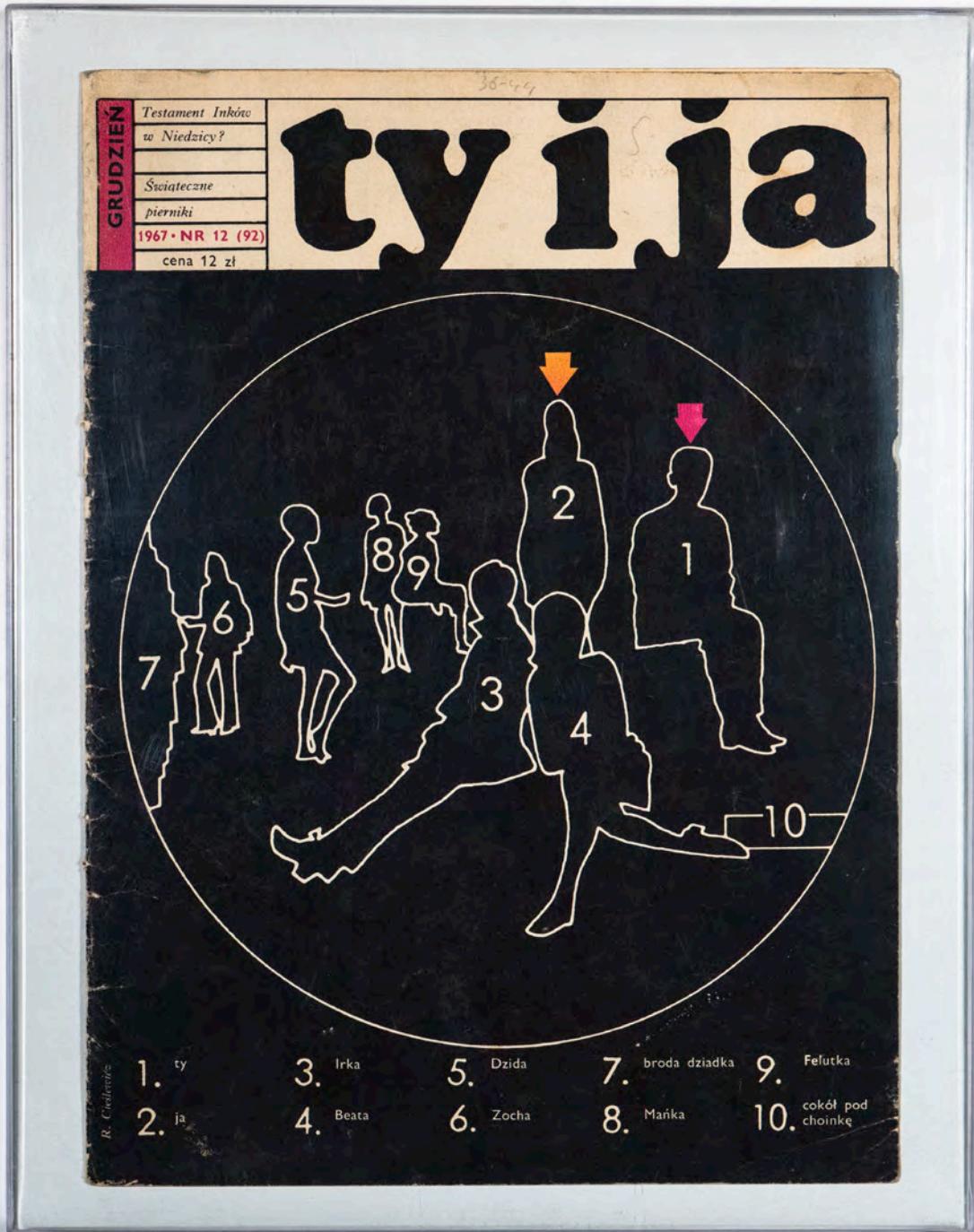
*Ty i Ja* was first published in 1959 by the Women's League, an offshoot of the official Polish United Workers' Party run by helmet-haired party harridans. Early on, however, it was hijacked by a group of young writers and designers. This was not as strange as it sounds. In the command economy—where a central planning office determined the amounts of buildings, books and spoons required by society—quantity always prevailed over quality. What mattered—at least at first—was how many magazines were available, not what was being said on their pages. After all, *Ty i Ja* was “just” a women’s magazine.

In the hands of editor Roman Juryś, the magazine was turned into a remarkable vehicle for the popular discussion of modern life in all its dimensions. In the early 1960s, an issue might contain an earnest discussion by a psychologist on the unhappy state of marriage side-by-side with a photo-spread on erotic sculpture ornamenting Indian temples. [...]

*Ty i Ja*'s contributors struck a strange balance between fascination with the spectacle of the consumer society and its critique. This was in fact the position of many Polish intellectuals in the 1960s: left wing by inclination and by intellectual formation, they were, nevertheless, attracted to the forbidden pleasures of the consumer society. [...]

*Ty i Ja*—with its serious minded rhetoric and its fantasy—might be characterized as incoherent. Yet it was not. Perhaps Foucault's idea of the heterotopia can explain why. In heterotopia, unusual and heterogeneous things can exist side-by-side without one claiming special status over the others. On the pages of *Ty i Ja*, hierarchy gave way to lateral relations. This order of things can, according to Foucault, produce “an almost magical uncertain space” and “monstrous combinations that unsettle the flow of discourse.” Whilst this concept is usually understood in spatial terms, he suggested it could also be applied to describe writing that makes “impossible” discursive statements or challenges. What was “possible” in socialist Poland was, of course, predetermined by a historical script written by the Party. Viewed from this context, a magazine which eschewed inscribed social hierarchies and embraced uncertainty could, it seems, be “an almost magical space.” Not explicitly political, *Ty i Ja* took an interest in what had been rendered other or illicit by peevish minds in the Central Committee.

— “Applied Fantastic,” David Crowley, *Dot Dot Dot* #9, 2004



TROPICÁLIA OU PANIS ET CIRCENSIS LP SLEEVE

1968, 32.5 × 32.5 cm

In the 1960s, the question of national identity loomed large in third world post-colonial and anti-imperialist movements. Looking back in his 1997 memoir *Tropical Truth*, the musician Caetano Veloso writes that the goal of the Tropicalists was “to free ourselves from the Brazil we knew. We had to destroy the Brazil of the nationalists... and do away once and for all with its image.” At the same time, the artist Hélio Oiticica argued in favor of the “immediate reduction of all external influences to national models.” The National was also a signifier for countercultures elsewhere in the Western world. It could be difficult to distinguish the hippie tribe from the national demographic, and the yippies professed a love/hate relationship to their “Amerika.” In an early essay on the hippies, British cultural critic Stuart Hall remarked that even *Time* magazine couldn’t help noticing a “pure American species” under “the long hair, the beads and the kaftans,” while philosopher Marshall Berman commented on a similarity of spirit between “the megalomaniac in the White House” and those protesting outside the Pentagon, shouting the words of The Doors’ song: “We want the world and we want it now!”

Since the poet Oswald de Andrade wrote his *Manifesto antropófago*—literally, “manifesto of human-eating”—in 1928, cannibalism has been a revenant concept for a specifically Brazilian social identity. A brain-child of the Latin American avant-garde, *antropafágia* was a critical concept for the *movimento modernista* and post-war aesthetic experimentation generally, most prominently the 1960s counterculture that came to be called “Tropicália.” Artists like Oiticica rejected Anglo-American psychedelia and proposed instead the concept of the “suprasensorial” as an explicit alternative to the example of Leary and co.—a rejection that questioned psychedelia’s universal status, as well as its formative relation to countercultures outside the U.S. As a quasi-mythical cannibalization of symbolic forms, then, *antropafágia* offers yet another perspective on psychedelia’s perpetual proliferation.

—“Black and White Psychedelia,” Dexter Bang Sinister, *Bulletins of The Serving Library* #4, 2012



## KENT STATE

Richard Hamilton, 1970, 15-color screenprint, 74 × 103 cm

In 1970, the late British Pop artist Richard Hamilton coolly recounted this chain of events in order to tease out the implications of his 15-layer silkscreen print, *Kent State*. [...]

He had set up a photographic camera in front of his TV set at home, and over the course of a week of evenings waited patiently for an image to suggest itself as source material for further work. The camera had already snapped a number of exposures from a variety of sports, entertainment, and current affairs programs before footage of the shootings by National Guardsmen of students at Kent State University in Ohio (during a protest against the U.S. military's Cambodian Campaign) was screened on the news on Monday, May 4. The frame Hamilton finally developed shows the top half of the body of one of the shot students prostrate on the ground, head turned towards the amateur cine-camera that originally recorded the moment.

Given the gravity of the event, Hamilton deliberated, but anyway resolved to press ahead and make use of the shot—the questionable “arty treatment” of which, he supposed, might at least serve as a lasting indictment. In the screenprint that emerged several channels of transmission (and 15 layers of ink) later, Hamilton made sure to leave the curved, distorted edges of the cathode ray display within the black surround of his photo of the screen. He also positioned the rectangular shot on the left hand side of the printed sheet to mimic the off-center screen typical of that era’s TV sets. The image is thus “framed” five times over in the final print: first by the original cine-camera, second by the television, third by Hamilton’s photo-camera, fourth by the implied TV on the screenprint, fifth by the printed sheet itself—plus a sixth if you include the frame that encases the print when hung on a wall.

—“Procedural,” Stuart Bailey, *Bulletins of The Serving Library* #7, 2014



MONEY / HISTORY SPREAD FROM THE LAST WHOLE EARTH CATALOG

#1160, 1971, 46.5 × 62 cm

The WHOLE EARTH CATALOG functions as an evaluation and access device. With it, the user should know better what is worth getting and where and how to do the getting. An item is listed in the CATALOG if it is deemed:

- 1) Useful as a tool,
- 2) Relevant to independent education,
- 3) High quality or low cost,
- 4) Easily available by mail. [...]

It's our custom to print — and try to explain — our finances in each of our publications ... Business, we found, does best when performed as service. Service does best as service when it's approached as business.

— “Global Branding: A Condensed Biography of Stewart Brand as a Model Global Citizen Including the *Whole Earth Catalog*, Computer Games and Extended Scenarios,” David Reinhardt, *Dot Dot Dot* #8, 2004



## SCORE FOR CLAPPING MUSIC

Steve Reich, sheet music, 1972, 36 × 28.2 cm

Every Friday, I visit my friend at his studio. I show up, we chat for a few minutes, then spend an hour clapping together. We're learning Steve Reich's 1972 composition *Clapping Music*. The piece consists of one simple rhythmic phrase clapped repeatedly by two performers over the course of 13 sections. It begins with both players—named "clap 1" and "clap 2" in the score—beating the phrase in sync. Clap 1 loops the same pattern throughout the piece, while clap 2 shifts and inverts the phrase for each section. You can imagine it like two analog stopwatches set off at the same time, gradually going out of phase with one another; they remain \*in time\* but are passing through the minute cycles at different moments, creating dense syncopated effects. Played in a particularly resonant room, with echo and reverb as your backing band, Reich's study in phased rhythm can sound like the noise of three or four people, rather than just two.

With no melody or harmony involved, the score looks austere and mathematical. Beats are grouped into recurring patterns of ones, twos and threes, interspersed with rests. Precise instructions dictate the number of times each section is to be repeated. The score looks like a piece of music that should involve careful counting—a numbers game that might have been written by an Oulipian egghead more interested in questions of probability than musical lyricism. [...]

Early in our attempt to learn *Clapping Music*, I tried to make a version of the composition using the program Logic in order to get my head around how the piece is structured. Sequenced using the software's built-in drum machine, my Logic version followed the score precisely. But with incremental changes in tempo and inflections in each clap eradicated, to my ears it sounded lifeless. The computer has no cerebellum, no capacity for getting a rhythm wrong, hitting a note slightly ahead or behind the beat. It will never choose to follow the bass player rather than the drummer. Sometimes numbers just don't add up.

— “Beat Generation,” Dan Fox, *Bulletins of The Serving Library* #7, 2014

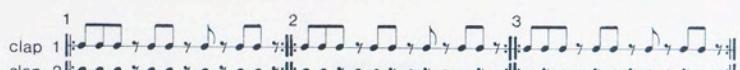
SCORE FOR CLAPPING MUSIC

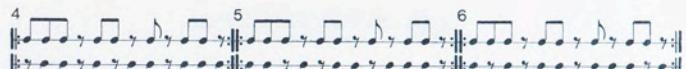


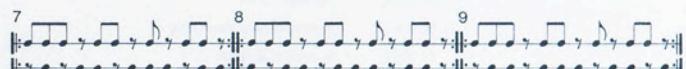
**Clapping Music**  
for two performers (1972)

Steve Reich  
(\* 1936)

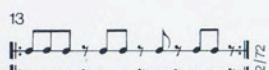
$J = 160-184$  Repeat each bar 12 times/Répétez chaque mesure 12 fois/Jeden takt zwölfmal wiederholen

clap 1 |   
clap 2 |   
*f*

4 |   
5 |   
6 | 

7 |   
8 |   
9 | 

10 |   
11 |   
12 | 

13 |   
12/2 | 

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## BHUTAN TALKING STAMPS

From the series SC 152–152F, 5 mini flexidiscs, 1973,  
18 × 54 cm

Issued as a set of seven in red, yellow, green, blue, purple, white and black and in various sizes, the talking stamps were in fact miniature phonograph records. Constructed of a normal adhesive back and a flexidisc-like front, the stamps featured audio recordings of folk songs, the Royal Bhutan Anthem, the history of Bhutan in Bhutanese and the history of Bhutan as told in English by Mr Burt Kerr Todd himself. In a voice straight out of a 1940s newsreel Todd reported on the geography, government and economics of the nation, describing the Bhutanese as "a strong and well-built race whose religion is Buddhism." He duly reported that "over 1,000 kilometers of roads criss-cross the country, there are one hundred schools and sixty post offices." Each stamp, which could be used both for national and international mail, came in a small envelope with the statement,

"This envelope contains your BHUTAN postage stamp. In order to develop a national economy, these unusual beautiful stamps are now the principal industry. Bhutan is a tiny 90 mi. kingdom high in the Himalayan mountains. This stamp, one of a series, is a collector's item."

Today, as when Todd first visited, Bhutan remains primarily agrarian. However, instead of an economic system sustained by stamps, close to 75% of the current economy is dependent upon the sale of hydro-electric power to India and, increasingly, a reliance on tourism.

— “Greetings from Bhutan,” Alex Klein, *Dot Dot Dot* #13, 2006

BHUTAN TALKING STAMPS



## WIRE'S PINK FLAG, CHAIRS MISSING, 154, AND ON RETURNING LP SLEEVES

1977, 1978, 1979, 1989, each 32.5 × 32.5 cm

These are Wire's first three albums from the end of the 1970s, plus one compilation from a decade later. Each of the first three has its own independent anecdote. For example, immediately after the band had decided on *Pink Flag* as the title for their debut, they played a gig in the British seaside town of Plymouth, and were walking along the seafront the following morning when they came across a perfect solitary pink flag flapping against a spotless blue sky, which they photographed immediately (a good example of designing backwards rather than laterally). But the best thing about these albums is the Best-of, *On Returning*, compiled ten years after 154. Although Wire had an extensive output in-between, this compilation collected tracks exclusively from those first three, and so the cover similarly montages all three original covers together to form a new composite. It's a good example of one of those ideas so perfectly obvious that it's almost reflexively overlooked.

— “Never Mind the Bollocks (After Jamie Reid),” Stuart Bailey,  
*Dot Dot Dot* #11, 2005



WIRE'S PINK FLAG, CHAIRS MISSING, 154, AND ON RETURNING LP SLEEVES



## JOHN COOPER CLARKE SONGBOOK

Barney Bubbles & John Cooper Clarke, 1979, 37.5 × 30 cm

Most of the work shown here results from a designer and an artist (or writer, whatever) collaborating to produce a new piece of work, rather than merely documenting an existing one. Contrary to the general (and generally accepted) situation of a designer working at least one step removed as a detached *form-giver* (to borrow from the Dutch), these works push for a resolution which neither designer nor artist could have achieved alone, something greater than the sum of their constituent parts. Here are the cover and two spreads of what is essentially a book of lyrics by post-punk poet John Cooper Clarke. Cartoonish abstract character portraits were a recurring motif in the work of Barney Bubbles, and the one of Cooper Clarke here typically captures multiple facets of his style and character: contrary, electric, day-glo, pop and punk. Inside, Bubbles took every page of Coopers and Clarkes in the phone book, crossed them all out and used them as a background wallpaper on which to compose a series of formal collages incorporating fragments of angular poetry and judicious photography. This freeform invention is carried over onto the phone book's advertising pages, subverted by Bubbles into a series of cryptic announcements.

— “Never Mind the Bollocks (After Jamie Reid),” Stuart Bailey,  
*Dot Dot Dot* #11, 2005

JOHN COOPER CLARKE SONGBOOK



XTC'S GO 2 LP SLEEVE

Hipgnosis, 1979, 32.5 × 32.5 cm

– “On Graphic Design, 1979,” Stuart Bailey, *Dot Dot Dot* #2,  
2001

## XTC Go 2

This is a RECORD COVER. This writing is the DESIGN upon the record cover. The DESIGN is to help SELL the record. We hope to draw your attention to it and encourage you to pick it up. When you have done that maybe you'll be persuaded to listen to the music - in this case XTC's Go 2 album. Then we want you to BUY it. The idea being that the more of you that buy this record the more money Geffen Records, the manager Ian Reid and XTC themselves will make. To the aforementioned this is known as PLEASURE. A good cover DESIGN is one that attracts more buyers and gives more pleasure. This writing is trying to pull you in much like an eye-catching picture. It is designed to get you to READ IT. This is called luring the VICTIM, and you are the VICTIM. But if you have a free mind you should STOP READING NOW! because all we are attempting to do is to get you to read on. Yet this is a DOUBLE BIND because if you indeed stop you'll be doing what we tell you, and if you read on you'll be doing what we've wanted all along. And the more you read on the more you're falling for this simple device of telling you exactly how a good commercial design works. They're TRICKS and this is the worst TRICK of all since it's describing the TRICK whilst trying to TRICK you, and if you've read this far then you're TRICKED but you wouldn't have known this unless you'd read this far. At least we're telling you directly instead of seducing you with a beautiful or haunting visual that may never tell you. We're letting you know that you ought to buy this record because in essence it's a PRODUCT and PRODUCTS are to be consumed and you are a consumer and this is a good PRODUCT. We could have written the band's name in special lettering so that it stood out and you'd see it before you'd read any of this writing and possibly have bought it anyway. What we are really suggesting is that you are FOOLISH to buy or not buy an album merely as a consequence of the design on its cover. This is a con because if you agree then you'll probably like this writing - which is the cover design - and hence the album inside. But we've just warned you against that. The con is a con. A good cover design could be considered as one that gets you to buy the record, but that never actually happens to YOU because YOU know it's just a design for the cover. And this is the RECORD COVER.

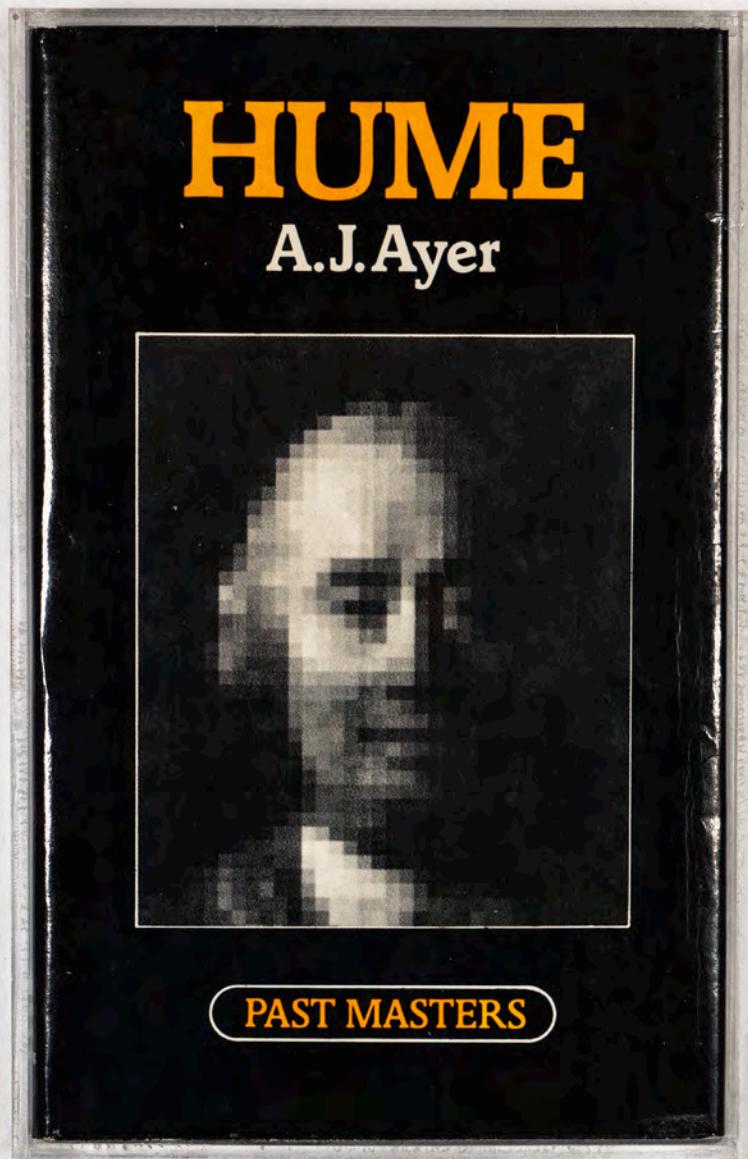
## A. J. AYER'S HUME

Farrar, Straus & Giroux paperback edition, 1980, 19.6 × 12.8 cm

Earlier this spring, I picked up a paperback from a street vendor on upper Broadway... The cover has a picture of David Hume, an oil painting of unidentified provenance which looks as if it has been run through the filters of an early Paintbox computer graphics program to realize this exaggerated pixel-portrait. I couldn't believe my eyes (Hume, arch-skeptic of the senses would say that is precisely the point)—the cover image viscerally flipped back and forth in my brain between being a portrait of David Hume, 18th century Scottish Enlightenment philosopher, and being simply surface, the pure sensation of its infra-thin Paintbox pixelation effect. No sooner do you decide for yourself that it is one, then it flips back to the other.

— “Everything is in Everything,” David Reinfurt, *Bulletins of The Serving Library* #2, 2011

A. J. AYER'S HUME



## FÄLSCHUNGSSERSCHWERENDE SCHRIFT

German car license plate, c. 1980, 11.3 × 46 cm

Following a spike in automobile thefts through the early 1970s — many of which involved tampering with stolen tag numbers to elude police detection — the German government commissioned a new license plate typeface. It was December 1977, and Germany was still raw from a recent rash of hijackings, murders and suicides associated with the Red Army Faction. [...]

Born awkwardly between eras — drawn by hand in order to be better read by machines — the *fälschungsserschwerende Schrift* font bears the marks of both 19th-century guild-enshrined handcraft and 20th-century anonymous automation. And like any technology, it is bound by the political determinants of its design: while its original “tamper-proof” premise may have proved a MacGuffin, these weird-looking letters are an early product of our contemporary surveillance state. What reads to us as a clumsy lack of formal continuity is exactly what makes it legible to a computer. It is an alphabet whose defining characteristic is precisely that it has no defining characteristic, other than having no defining characteristic.

— “Fälschungsserschwerende Schrift,” Benjamin Tiven,  
*Bulletins of The Serving Library* #3, 2012

FÄLSCHUNGSERSCHWERENDE SCHRIFT



## JOHN FOXX'S METAMATIC AND THE GARDEN LP SLEEVES

1980, 1981, each 32.5 × 32.5 cm

I am in two minds about this record. I've realized that it's impossible for me to make a conscious statement, when subconsciously everything I see or hear advocates for one of these two minds. Every exhibit can be used in defense of the one and will subsequently become a direct attack on the other. Listening to this record, I can only conclude that it is out of time. It is a concept album: adding fuel to the fire, more material in different forms, distracting my concentration and putting me back in two minds. The music becomes lost, along with the ability to listen and not let my mind wander down dualist forks in the road.

— “Record Reviews,” Will Holder, *Dot Dot Dot* #4, 2002



JOHN FOXX'S METAMATIC AND THE GARDEN LP SLEEVES



## TOTAL DESIGN PUBLICITY PHOTOGRAPH (WITH REFERENCE DIAGRAM)

Photographer unknown, 1982, photographic print, drawing on photographic paper, each 28.3 × 22 cm

A willful misapplication of the term "relational aesthetics" is suggestive when considering a set of group portraits from design practices of the last 40 years. How is the practice organized? What are its working methods? Who is in charge? Who makes the coffee? [...]

Gathered around a common table, but retaining their autonomy, Total Design marks the appearance of the firm model for a design practice. Each designer is enabled to act as an independent agent, competently producing the correct design solution for a client in the context of a professional practice. Heterogeneous in age, gender and attire, members of Total Design have gathered in one room for this photograph, but each appears as if they've just arrived from somewhere else.

Behind the forced casualness of the photographic composition is the organizational model of the firm. In the firm, each designer is allowed a significant degree of freedom, but also works under an umbrella ideology. The model encourages growth, adding professional designers easily to accommodate increasingly complex projects for large corporate clients. This is not a design practice organized around a personal agenda or an artisanal house style, but rather a resolutely modern, efficient and professional (total) design firm.

— “Group Theory: A Short Course In Relational Aesthetics,”  
Mark Owens & David Reinfurt, *Dot Dot Dot* #7, 2003



TOTAL DESIGN PUBLICITY PHOTOGRAPH (WITH REFERENCE DIAGRAM)



SCRITTI POLITTI'S ASYLUMS IN JERUSALEM / JACQUES DERRIDA DOUBLE A-SIDE 12" SINGLE SLEEVE

1983, 32.5 × 32.5 cm

A strange coincidence of two developments during the 1980s has been on my mind lately. Neither development was a trend, exactly. But both have had after-effects of deep import to this day. There was one instance where they encountered each other: the release of the single usually referred to as *Asylums in Jerusalem* by the band Scritti Politti. In fact it was issued as a double A-side, and on the reverse was a song called *Jacques Derrida*. [...]

Ultimately, after 1980, among the youthful generation that had first been moved by punk, a movement began that raised seduction, physical decadence, longing and melancholy to positive virtues, that no longer claimed to be original or working from human nature, but rather affirmed the constructed and quoted nature of our "own" feelings and songs, that affirmed artificiality and the pose, and didn't try to drown out or shut down the status quo, but rather tried to slip through its cracks: I'm thinking of Orange Juice, The Monochrome Set, Josef K, The Teardrop Explodes, Culture Club, Dexy's Midnight Runners, ABC, Felt, and, of course, Scritti Politti. Many others have been forgotten. [...]

One could also find an affinity through the novels of Camus, Kerouac, Hesse, Sartre, and Genet. Which brings me to the second striking development I mentioned above. For in this area, too, an important new movement of the early 1980s became manifest. The romanciers of the present, the authors whose books as much portrayed the world as questioned it, who with their subtleties and overheated texts could flatter the youth as well as move the ground beneath their feet, were now Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, and Jean Francois Lyotard. They were academics, scholars, philosophers by trade, and yet they were read and memorized with the same excited and impatient rapture, and used and misused for personal life choices and values, as Salinger or Goethe's *Werther* before them. [...]

But the teenagers who discovered soul music back then and schlepped around bad translations from the French in their jacket pocket to read on the subway never again invested so much emotional intensity in such difficult theoretical texts. [...] "Theory" and this new, reference-laden pop music were models for *Gesamtkunstwerk*-like access to the world, and yet at the same time they were minor songs with minor texts, minor books with just one or two quickly communicable basic tenets; a constellation which culminated in Green Gartside of Scritti Politti singing *I'm in love with Jacques Derrida*...

– “AA Philosophy,” Diedrich Diederichsen, *Dot Dot Dot* #8, 2004



## TALKING HEADS' SPEAKING IN TONGUES LP WITH ACETATES

Robert Rauschenberg, printed acetate sheets and clear vinyl LP,  
1983, 32.5 × 32.5 cm

But how to evade the narrowing limitations of intentional style and logic, whether in songwriting or in design? The sleeve design for the Talking Heads album *Speaking in Tongues* contains some useful clues. The expression that David Byrne chose for the title of this album, "speaking in tongues" (from the Biblical story of Pentecost), indicates the "divinely inspired" jabbering by people in a religious trance. Anthropological research has shown that the utterances of people who are speaking in tongues are not, as conventional wisdom holds, related to their native language or even to their religious convictions. People are not made to speak in tongues by their religion, but the opposite is true: the speaking in tongues is caused by specific bodily changes, which in turn drive religious belief.

What kind of graphic design can illustrate these concepts?

At Byrne's request, Robert Rauschenberg designed a cover: a circular collage of color photos, separated out into the process colors cyan-blue, magenta-red and yellow. The blue separation is printed on the back of a transparent record sleeve, the yellow on the front, and the magenta on a circle that has been added to the front and can be turned. The record itself is made of transparent vinyl. This creates a "dial-a-picture" system, since the photos on the red component have been shuffled, which means that a spectator has to turn this part of the sleeve in order to get a clear, full-color picture of a part of the collage. [...]

However, Rauschenberg's sleeve design for *Speaking in Tongues* turned out to be too complicated to be produced in the numbers that were needed for the entire edition of the million-selling album.

— “David Byrne: Getting the I out of Design,” Sytze Steenstra, *Dot Dot Dot* #4, 2002

TALKING HEADS' SPEAKING IN TONGUES LP WITH ACETATES



DUST JACKET FOR RICHARD HAMILTON'S COLLECTED WORDS

Richard Hamilton, 1983, 46.5 × 62 cm

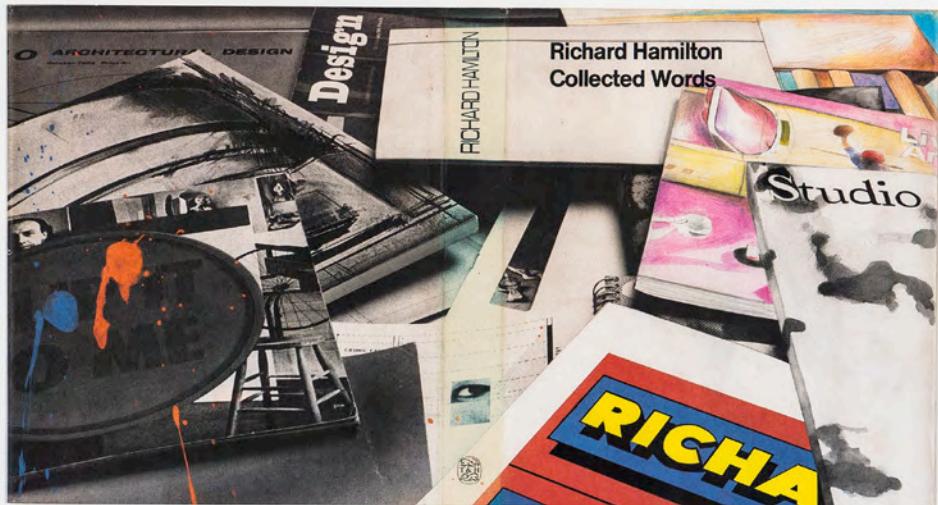
I produced a very serious piece of writing trying to express what I had been doing in painting. And I used collage, pastiche, and all the other devices that were applicable to paintings, which seemed to be easily converted to the written word. And within a week of that being published I met Erica Brausen in the gallery on Bond Street: "Say, what about coming up to Highgate?" And she said, "Well, I won't bother coming up to Highgate, but I saw that piece in the magazine and let's fix up a show." [...] It struck me then that the power of the word is greater than the power of the brush. [...]

Having written about things in a way that makes people think they're serious and reasoned, I had almost come to the conclusion that perhaps the paintings were reasoned and serious. And it takes a long time before the thought begins to come back that maybe you don't know what you're doing. And now I'm thoroughly convinced that I don't know what I'm doing and that writing is a way of finding out. Very often, the writing occurs after the event or partway through it. It's not like writing a program, although I have done that. Understanding begins to come back to the work from the need to think about it.

(Richard Hamilton)

— “Collected Words,” Rob Giampietro, *Dot Dot Dot* #14, 2007

DUST JACKET FOR RICHARD HAMILTON'S COLLECTED WORDS

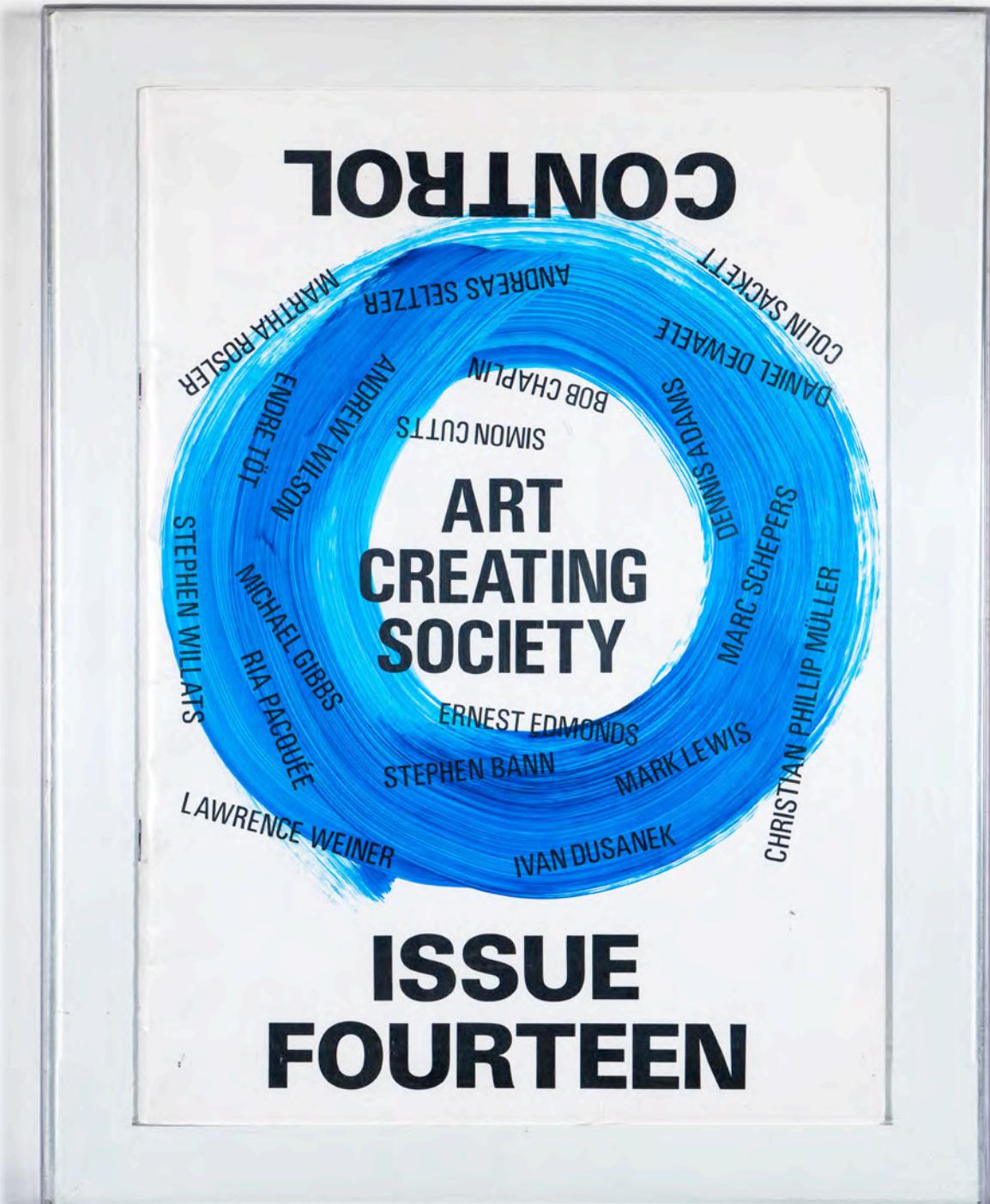


## CONTROL MAGAZINE

Stephen Willats, issue 14: "Art Creating Society," 1989,  
36 × 28.3 cm

In 1965 he initiated *Control* magazine, which aimed to respond to the current developments in artistic practices and was centered on the idea of artists explaining practice. The title was derived from the cybernetic idea of "self-determining models of control" [...] thus a model for thinking around ideas of self-organization. The first issue received contributions from a number of Willats's close friends and colleagues and was printed overnight for cash and self-distributed.

— “Stephen Willats and the Speculative Diagram,” Emily Pethick, *Dot Dot Dot* #14, 2007



FOUND TRANSPARENCY OF SUE LYON (DOCTORED)

Frances Stark, c. 1990, 16 × 15 cm

The cover girl is Sue Lyon who played the title role in Kubrick's adaptation of Nabokov's *Lolita*. Someone has punched holes in the transparency, leaving three dots to censor the excessiveness of an inappropriately erotic mouth.

– “On Biography: Féminin,” Frances Stark, *Dot Dot Dot* #11, 2005

FOUND TRANSPARENCY OF SUE LYON (DOCTORED)



## J. D. SALINGER'S FRANNY AND ZOOEY

Little, Brown paperback edition, 1991, 18 × 11.5 cm

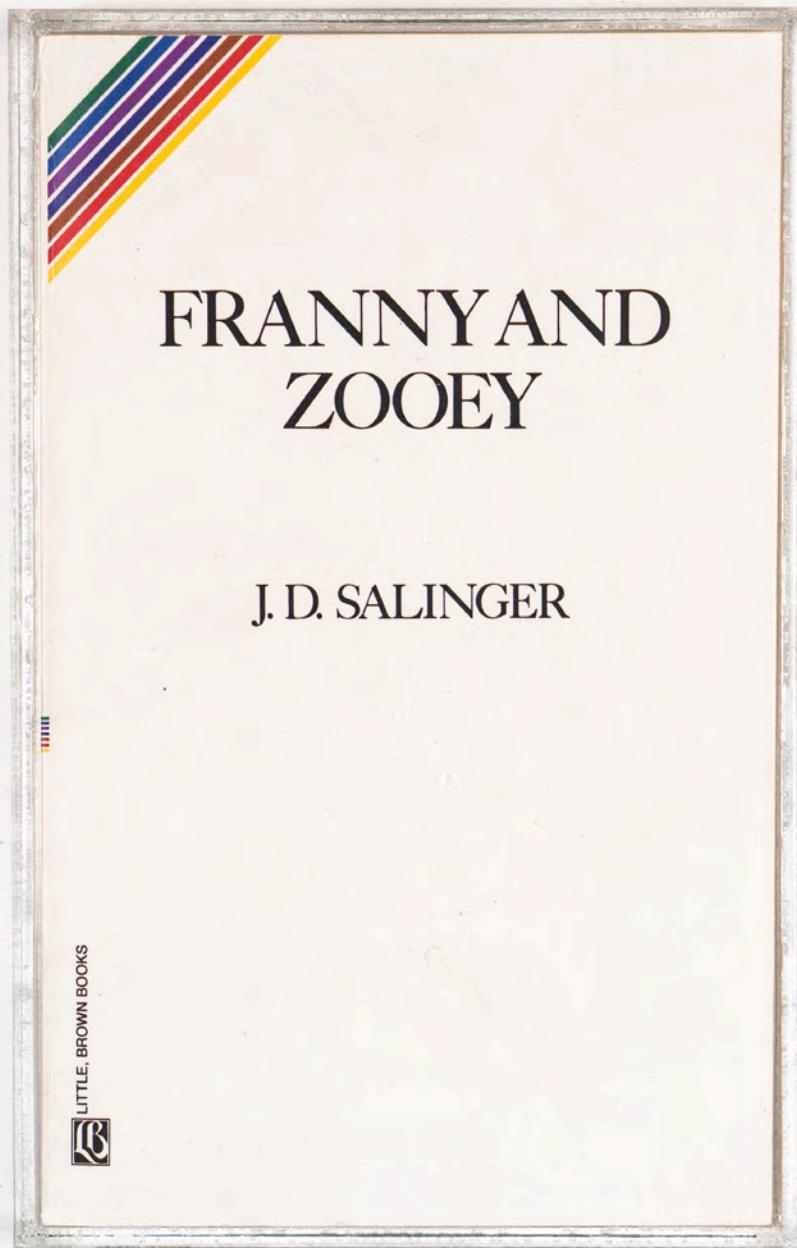
Curiously enough, the novelist J. D. Salinger was outspoken on the subject of graphic design, and his antagonism was formative to my own ambivalence. From the point of view of an angry young man, he was always a usefully offset vantage—that of an unusually invested author who was (via the bitter mouthpiece of Holden Caulfield) famously against “phoniness” in all its forms. This remains a fairly good euphemism for much that operates under the name “graphic design” these days.

In the wake of the success of *The Catcher in the Rye* in 1951, which is to say, once he'd acquired a certain clout in the publishing world, Salinger issued a caveat in his contracts that forbade illustrations to be used on the covers of his books. In effect, he was making sure to limit the amount of damage graphic design—then in the process of shapeshifting into “marketing”—could do. [...]

None are more in tune with Salinger's attitude, though, than this set of covers, published by Little, Brown, and happily still in print. I like to imagine that Salinger himself was responsible for these editions, though obviously I don't think that he literally prepared the artwork or wrote a brief, only that they correspond entirely with the sensibility of his prose. That's to say, the Little, Brown books seem \*inevitable\*: a family of modest, diminutive paperbacks typeset without pretension or fancy, with an uncoated card cover only slightly stiffer than its light-as-a-feather interior, which makes them easy to pocket and cheap to mail; the title and author in unaffected, unspaced capitals; and literally cutting across such austerity, that still-surprising abstract rainbow at top left. All seems fully consonant with the maverick Zen philosophy Salinger was working out in and through his later fiction.

— “Hardy Perennials,” Stuart Bailey, *Bulletins of The Serving Library* #6, 2013

J. D. SALINGER'S FRANNY AND ZOOEY



## WOODSTOCK MOVIE

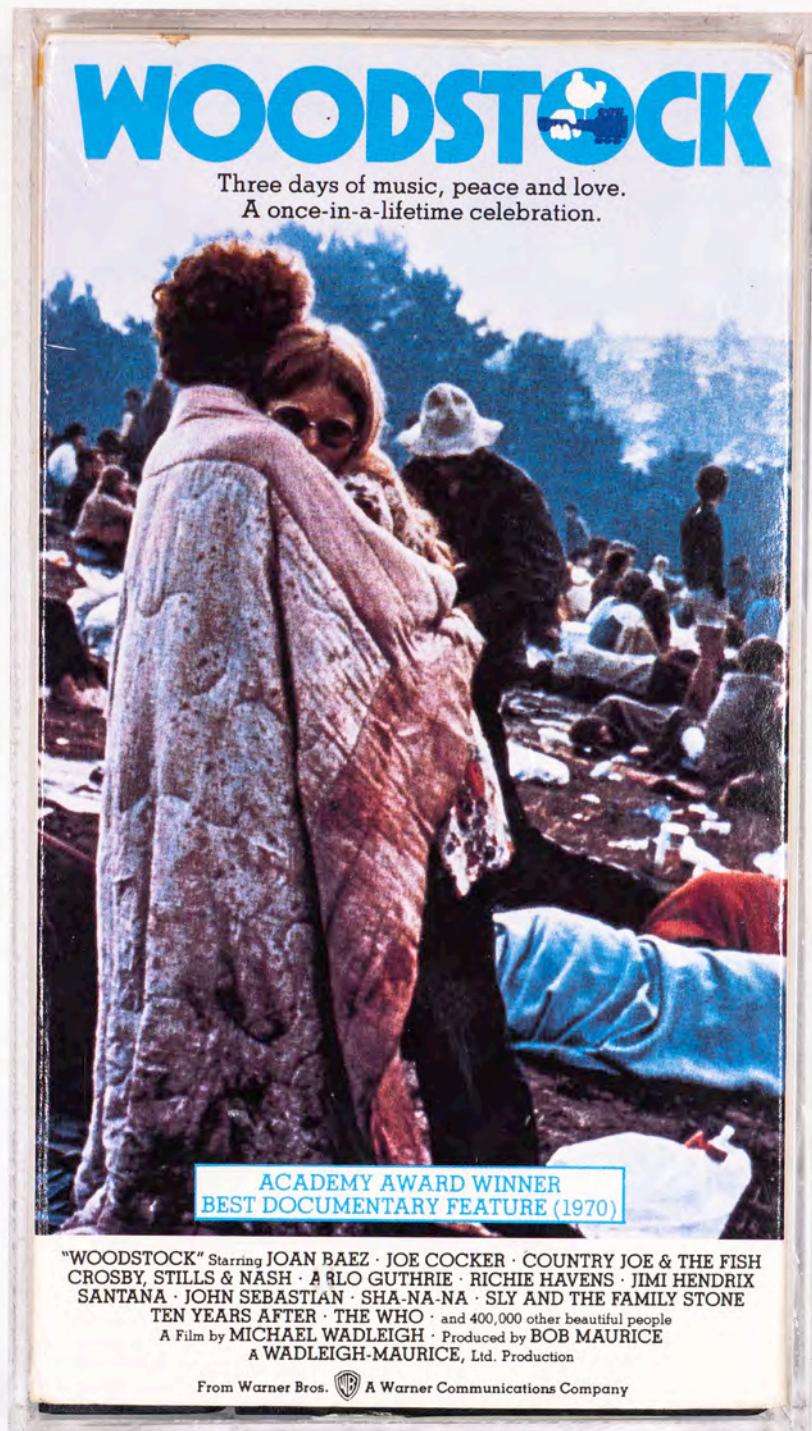
1992, VHS cassette, 19.7 × 11.2 cm

Martin Scorsese, one of the editors, attests that “without the film, the concert would not be more than a footnote to the social and cultural history of the 1960s—represented by a still photo in a picture book, a line or two in the history books. What the movie did, and continues to do, is distill the Woodstock experience, and, more important, keep it vibrant and alive.”

More pertinent perhaps are the words of arch-druid and hippie chief Jerry Garcia: “Woodstock … it’s a Biblical epic! an unbelievable kind of thing!”

The quasi-celebrity status of Woodstock—the town, not the event—rests on the compelling myth of sacred ground which ignores the inconvenient truth that the festival actually happened elsewhere. Since moving to New York City in 2006, I have become a frequent visitor to Woodstock. Something draws me there. It is simultaneously compelling and repellent; in a word, \*uncanny,\* as the relations between “self” and “it” become charged.

— “Tie-Dye in my Arm,” Mark Beasley, *Bulletins of The Serving Library* #4, 2012



## COLOR PORTRAIT OF UMBERTO ECO

Steve Double, 1997, photographic print, 70 × 52.2 cm

Color is not an easy matter. James Gibson, in *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems*, says that "the meaning of the term color is one of the worst muddles in the history of science." If one uses the term "color" to mean the pigmentation of substances in the environment, one has not said anything about our chromatic perception. Johannes Itten, in his *Kunst der Farbe*, distinguishes between pigments as chromatic reality and our perceptual response as chromatic effect. The chromatic effect, it seems, depends on many factors: the nature of surfaces, light, contrast between objects, previous knowledge, and so on.

I do not have any competence about pigments and I have very confused ideas about the laws governing chromatic effect; moreover I am neither a painter, nor an art critic. My personal relationship with the colored world is a private affair as much as my sexual activity, and I am not supposed to entertain my readers with my personal reactivity towards the polychromous theater of the world. Thus, as far as colors are concerned, I take the privilege of considering myself a blind man.

— “The Colors We See,” Umberto Eco, *Bulletins of The Serving Library* #11, 2016

COLOR PORTRAIT OF UMBERTO ECO



OBITUARIES 1999

Katrine Herian, 1999, photographic print, 60.6 × 42 cm

– “Obituaries 1999,” Katrine Herian, *Dot Dot Dot* #11, 2005



## POSTER FOR NO GHOST JUST A SHELL

M/M Paris, 2001, silkscreen print, 174 × 119.5 cm

The image brings us full circle, back to Disney, to EPCOT, to pop stars and soda pop, to manufactured tourism, protests, and the like, and this is absolutely the point. It's all related. In an earlier M/M project with Philippe Parreno, Parreno and the artist Pierre Huyghe went to Japan and purchased the copyright to a manga cartoon character called Annlee. According to the project description, she was cheap. M/M explains, "The price of a manga figure relates to the complexity of its character traits and thus its ability to adapt to a story line and 'survive' several episodes. Annlee had no particular qualities, and so she would have disappeared from the scene very quickly." Annlee was condemned to death. Parreno and Huyghe saved her life and set her to work, making her image available for any artist to use, free of charge. Whether the hell of an early manga death or a lifetime in image purgatory is preferable is left to the audience. The project title, "No Ghost Just a Shell," drains Annlee of her soul in order to make her a vessel. While M/M concedes that "the 'life-prolonging' measures raise some 'melancholy' humanitarian questions," they also point out, wisely, that the project short-circuits fundamental assumptions about the artmaking process, and this is rare. The "same" image repeats again and again, but begins to articulate a kind of difference. Is an Annlee shell always the same? What is the role of the people who operate it? Are they subjective? How does identity come into being for characters in cinema and in art?

The Annlee of today is the Mickey Mouse of long ago, a commercial unit in a network comprising thousands of people in every part of the world. Her image is a poster for herself, which is a shell meant to be inhabited by others. There is nothing simple about her new life, but this may be what is beautiful and disgusting about it at the same time, what is so fundamentally true. As she stares longingly, sorrowfully out at us time and time again, we can not only stare back at her, but also know through her eyes. Annlee is ours, and we are Annlee. She has been saved by culture in order to be exploited by it, and she has been invented by culture in order to fuel it. That great symbol of fuel, the Shell Oil trademark, an arbitrary sign, replaces the word "shell," itself an arbitrary sign, in M/M's poster for the show. Arbitrary, perhaps, but essential to remember: I mean, wasn't our desire for oil part of what got us into this mess? And wasn't controlling others in order to save them part of it, too? It's hard to know, and it's hard to say.

This is the problem with posters.

—“The Problem with Posters,” Rob Giampietro,  
*Dot Dot Dot* #7, 2003



PHOTOGRAPH OF BUTCHER'S BAR, LONDON EC1

Eugene Menard, 2001, photographic print, 31 × 20.8 cm

Dear Eugene: You created the atmosphere of the Butcher's Bar café using the "least design"—the existing butcher's shop as a backdrop for the interior of the café. How did you come to this decision? What were your motivations? Did you sense that you were taking a risk?

Dear Kim: The ultimate challenge for me is to reinvent the familiar space—so people pay attention to something that would have previously been ignored. I believe in the richness of the world, not designers' portfolios. Designers impose standards and uniform solutions on things that deserve to be unique, resulting in some kind of generic identity in different locations. New is not always better. And we are not any smarter than the previous generation. Uniqueness has been replaced by uniformity.

— “Doing Nothing,” Kim Levine, *Dot Dot Dot #2*, 2001

PHOTOGRAPH OF BUTCHER'S BAR, LONDON EC1



## BAUHAUS YOGA

Paulina Olowska, 2001, 2 photographic prints,  
each 21.4 × 31.4 cm

Millions of people around the world are searching to find states of relaxation and to improve their physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional well being. The two most popular practices are Yoga and Bauhaus. Although Bauhaus is sometimes too grey or monotonous to be loved by the masses, increasing numbers of an educated generation who are disgruntled with the limitations of their own traditions are looking for alternatives to integrate into their lives. Bauhaus and Yoga, both utopian, embody simplicity and practicality of progress. Their main goal is reaching perfection as a balance of body and mind. Yoga, literally meaning "the union of the mind and body," is a demanding discipline. There are many styles. They usually involve physical practices made up of postures combined with meditation and chanting. Some of the potential benefits of Yoga include strengthened and toned muscles, improved digestion and circulation and decreased fatigue. [...] Bauhaus formed in 1919 in Weimar aiming to transform everyday lifestyle, to reform and revitalize modern architecture and design, to combine high arts with minor arts, to create an environment that would satisfy man's spiritual, as well as material, needs. This spirit appears to have grown out of Bauhäuslers' dedication to principles, consistency in search, independence (whatever its price), love of society and social responsibility. [...] *Bauhaus Yoga* wants to grasp the past and present utopias by re-examining them, romanticizing them, and thereby building a new future based on resemblance and mutual attraction.

—“Bauhaus Yoga,” Paulina Olowska, *Dot Dot Dot* #6, 2003

BAUHAUS YOGA



## ESPERANTO MOTTO

Stuart Bailey, 2002, silkscreen stencil, 40 × 50 cm

This is a screenprint stencil, conveniently hung by its frame back-to-front, of an old Esperanto motto: "Logika, Neutrala, Facila" [Logical, Neutral, Easy]. It was included in an early *Dot Dot Dot* alongside Paulina Olowska's 2002 billboard campaign "Ci vu Parolas Esperanton?" [Do you speak Esperanto?] At the time I naively assumed such sentiments described the magazine too, but since then have slowly come to understand it as being far closer to the polar opposite: "Mallogika, Partia, Malsimpla" [Illogical, Biased, Complicated].

– "If You Stuck a Tag on Them . . ." Stuart Bailey, *Dot Dot Dot* #20, 2010



## OUIJA BOARD FOR JOSEF ALBERS

Paul Elliman, 2002, hardboard, 41 × 41 cm

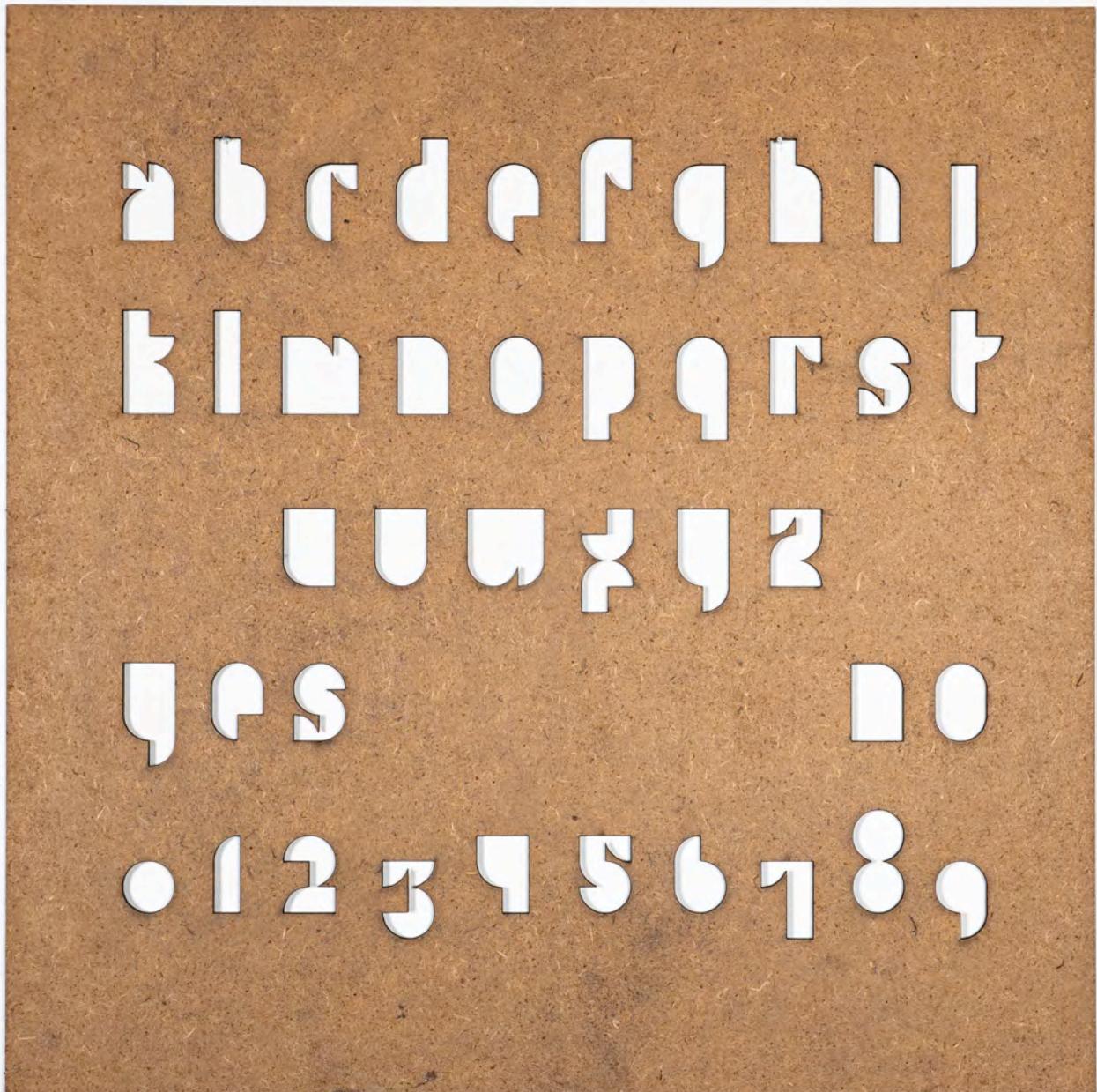
A few years ago a friend of mine in the art history department at Yale told me she had just been introduced to Albers at a collage fellows lunch. I said to her: What? That's impossible. She said No no, it was definitely him; very old German guy with silver hair, Josef Albers. I said No, you don't understand. He's been dead for 25 years—look I'll show you a picture of him. I found an old catalog with his portrait on the back page. She said Yes, that's him, Josef Albers. He was very friendly and it was definitely him.

The idea that he was or is somehow still around seems compelling enough. I started thinking about Albers and his work in a more grounded sort of way—not as someone whose presence can only be transmitted through the pages of a book, the medium of writing, or audio recordings. Artists have always tried to keep in historical contact through works from the past. I thought Fuck it, why not just make contact with Albers directly?

I was curious about the stencil typeface he'd designed in 1926, while he was at the Bauhaus. In a famous example of the work, Albers cut the letters out of a large square of glass. Adding the words YES and NO would turn it into a kind of Ouija keyboard. I was thinking of using glass, but hardboard is fine for a Ouija board, and it's also an Albers material—his square paintings were made on this board, in 16, 24, and 40 inch sizes.

—“A-Z, 0-9, YES/NO,” Paul Elliman, *Dot Dot Dot* #13, 2006

OUIJA BOARD FOR JOSEF ALBERS



## THE BOY WHO ALWAYS LOOKED UP

Ryan Gander, 2002, hardback, 21 x 14 cm

They both sat there on the roof looking out in silence. It wasn't an uncomfortable silence; they were just quiet and thoughtful, enjoying the view over London. And just then, when Tom least expected it, Ernö asked a question Tom had known he would ask one day. A question that nobody had ever asked him before and one that he knew would be difficult to answer.

"Why do you look up, Tom?" he asked, pushing his small round spectacles back up his nose. Tom's heart sank, and there was a long silence before either of them spoke again. But this wasn't a silence like before. This time it was a silence waiting to be broken. Tom felt like crying. He wanted to give an answer, but he didn't know what to say. Ernö sat and waited patiently. When he finally did speak, Tom's words came out in a funny squeaky voice and he had to blink his eyes a few times to stop the tears falling out.

"I think it's because it seems better up here than down there," he said, wiping his nose on the sleeve of his jumper. "Because it's empty up here in the sky and when I look up I feel I can do anything. Like anything's possible." Ernö smiled.

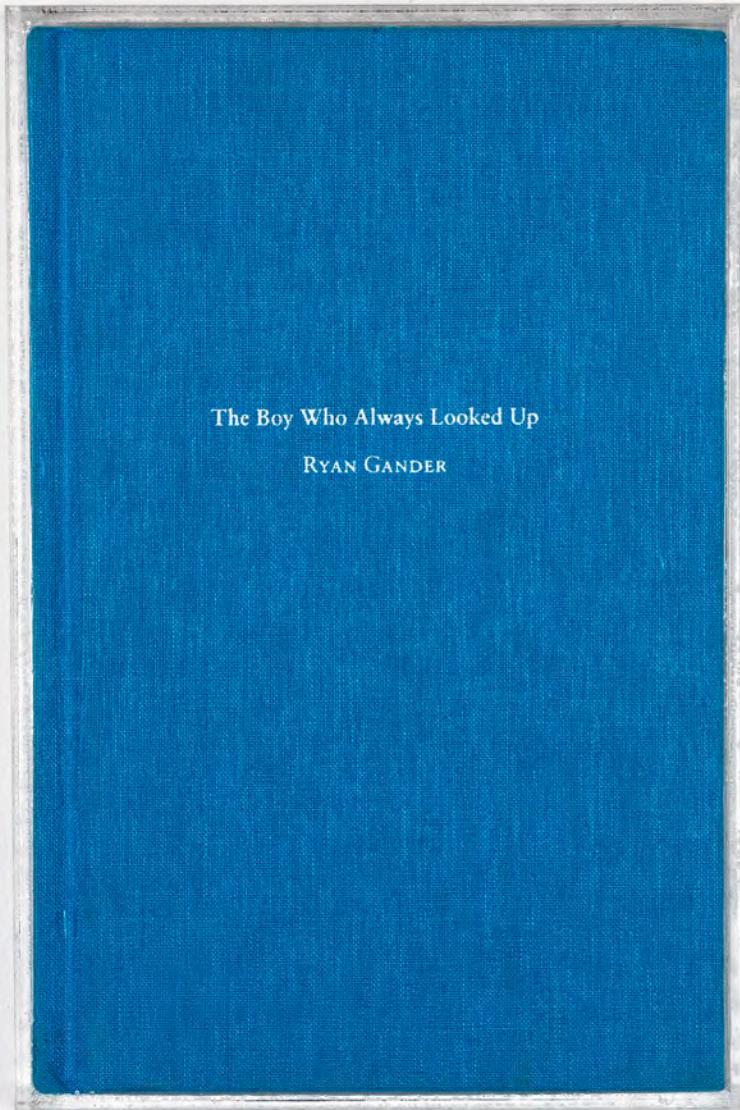
"Now, don't be sad Tom," he said. "Do you know what grown-ups call that?"

"No" said Tom, shaking his head wildly and wiping the tears from his cheeks which were now streaming from his eyes.

"Aspiration," he replied.

– "The Boy Who Always Looked Up," Ryan Gander,  
*Dot Dot Dot* #7/8, 2003/4

THE BOY WHO ALWAYS LOOKED UP



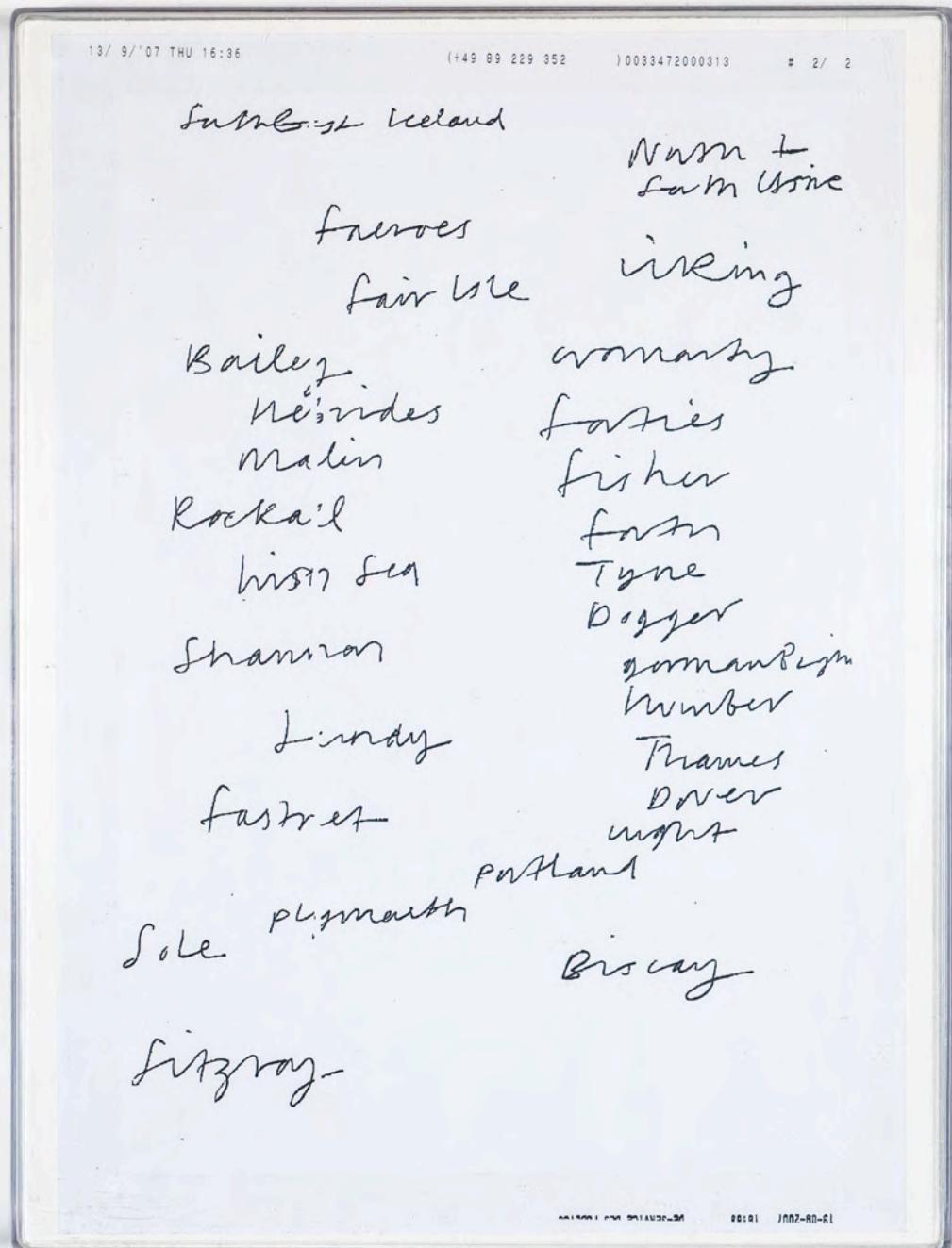
FAXED DRAWING OF UK SHIPPING FORECAST REGIONS

Paul Elliman, 2002, 31.8 × 23.5 cm

Earlier this year, a 90,000 square mile area of the Atlantic Ocean was phased out of a list of sea areas that surround the British Isles. As a BBC news report told us at the time: "The name Finisterre—deriving from the Spanish 'finis terre,' meaning the end of the earth—is also used by Spain for a different area of the sea and they asked Britain to come up with a new one." They did, and FitzRoy was introduced on 4 January 2002. These "sea areas"—named for the shallow banks, traditionally used as fishing grounds—are covered by the Met Office Shipping Forecast, a weather report prepared by the UK Meteorological Office and broadcast four times a day by BBC radio.

— “A Late Evening in the Future (part one),” Paul Elliman,  
*Dot Dot Dot* #5, 2002

FAXED DRAWING OF UK SHIPPING FORECAST REGIONS



FANTASIST

Chris Evans, 2002, airbrush painting, 56 × 78 cm

—Independent image, *Dot Dot Dot #9*, 2004

FANTASIST

FANTASIST

## POSTER FOR LA BATALLA DE LOS PATOS

M/M Paris, 2003, silkscreen print, 174 × 119.5 cm

Now, M/M also contributed a poster to "Utopia Station" with their longtime collaborator, the artist Philippe Parreno. That poster is a straight-faced parody of those two great bastions of pop culture, Coke and Disney. Screened in a Coke-can red, Mickey Mouse straddles a Coke bottle rebranded as Boing! cola. He's dressed in a western outfit meant to invoke both the colonizing cowboys of the USA, and, more specifically, Slim Pickens' nuclear bomb rodeo-ride from Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove*. The bomb, here, is not just the one the U.S. was readying to drop on Baghdad, but also the metaphorical bomb of American pop culture and all of its toxic fallout. Donald Duck's face caps the Coke bottle and winks at the film's title, *La Batalla de los Patos* [The battle of the ducks]. Mickey Mouse, a warrior, from outside the species, is off to save the world, but his eyes are crossed, his look deranged, his gun already fired. In a final touch, M/M has signed the piece by turning Walt Disney's signature "W" on its head.

—“The Problem with Posters,” Rob Giampietro,  
*Dot Dot Dot* #7, 2003



LA BATALLA DE LOS PATOS

A FILM BY PHILIPPE PARRENO AND RIRKRIT TIRAVANIJ ON A COOPERATIVE FACTORY LIFE  
IN COLLABORATION WITH LIAM GILLICK, M/M (PARIS) AND MONICA MANZUTTO  
ANNA SANDERS FILMS PRODUCTION 2003

⑨/⑩

## POSTER FOR NAIVE SET THEORY

Dexter Sinister, 2005, lithographic print, 89 × 64.5 cm

To Summarize:

1. A total absence of information about a given subject usually solicits no curiosity: without an awareness of its existence, we can't possibly care about it.
2. When we come to realize the existence of something we never knew was there before, our curiosity is sparked: What is it? How does it work? What should we call it? Why is it there? But we remain in the early stages of our ability to recognize and read it.
3. We attempt to accumulate information, and while additional research provides many answers, it also reveals additional questions, fueling more curiosity still.
4. At a certain point—at the top of the bell curve—we come to a place where effective discussion and debate is possible, but much still remains speculation. It is a moment of intense scrutinizing and educated hypothesizing when questions, answers, contradictions, controversy, desire, violence, disappointment and determination make up a complex system.
5. Little by little, though, speculation gives way to consensus. The power structures that make up the socio-political fabric begin enforcing their own choices. The many questions gather around common answers, and information becomes more and more organized, making the transition into the understood.
6. Sinking into the understood, our given subject provokes less and less curiosity.
7. Eventually, we have a dictionary definition.

—“Naive Set Theory,” Anthony Huberman, *Dot Dot Dot* #15, 2008

Undergraduate Texts in Mathematics

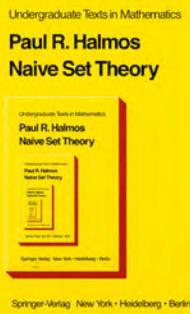
# **Paul R. Halmos**

# **Naive Set Theory**

Undergraduate Texts in Mathematics

## **Paul R. Halmos**

## **Naive Set Theory**



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POSTER FOR THE INVISIBLE UNIVERSITY

John Morgan, 2005, silkscreen print, 89 × 64 cm

— “I.U.,” David Greene, Samantha Hardingham & John Morgan,  
*Dot Dot Dot* #12, 2006

## The Invisible University and its historical values:

- I. U. means learning as an ecosystem  
(what on earth might this mean?).
- I. U. means being carbon positive.
- I. U. all data is everywhere, all the time.
- I. U. means architecture is no substitute for face-to-face contact.
- I. U. means a new relationship between man and nature.
- I. U. needs no new buildings.
- I. U. means tune up kits  
(small robots, cyber-pets and neuro-gardening – see catalogue available from caretaker).
- I. U. means knowing what time it is, is more important than knowing where you are.
- I. U. uses less fuel per hour than any other university.

I. U.

## PORTRAIT OF WYNDHAM LEWIS

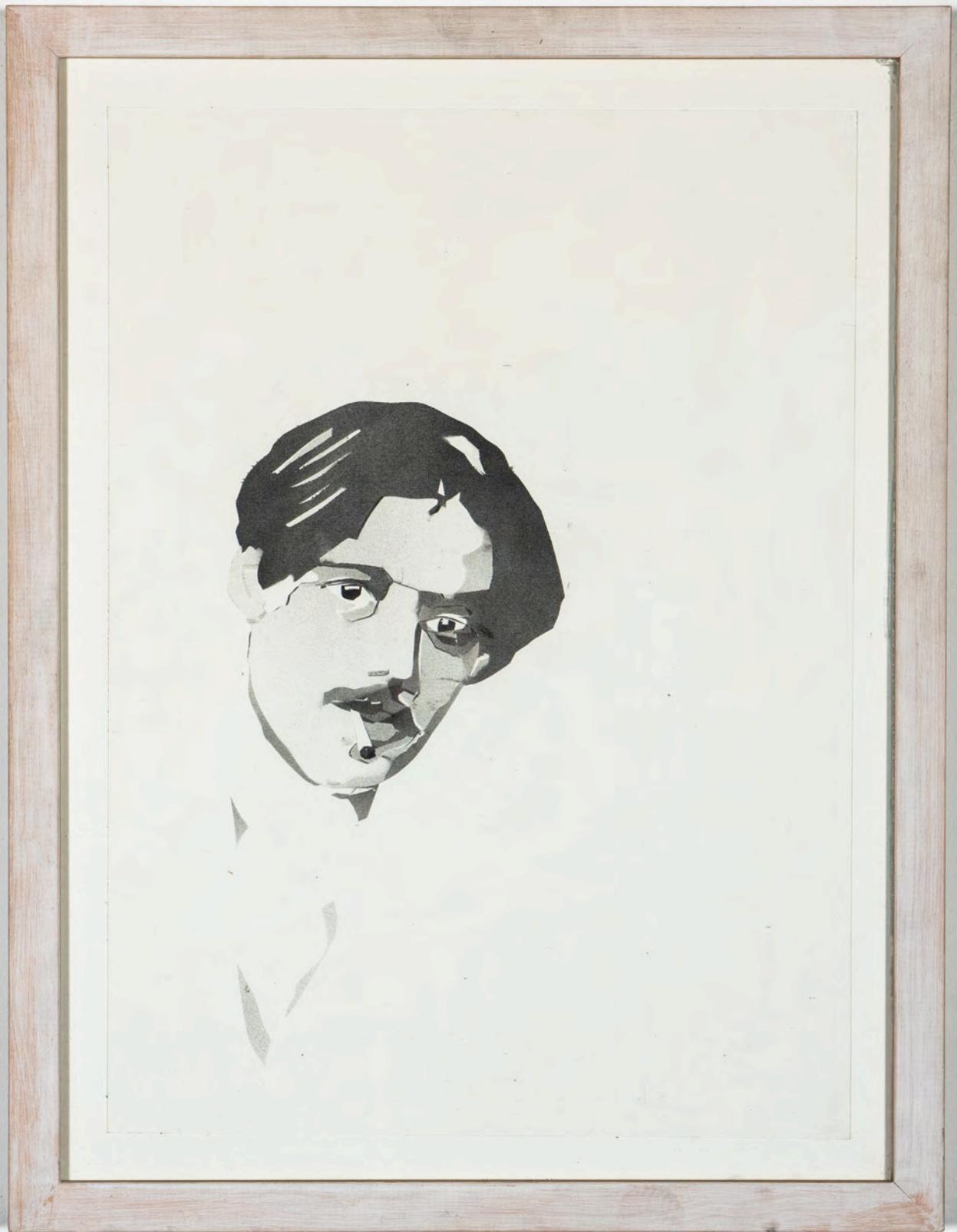
Chris Evans, 2005, airbrush painting, 43 × 33 cm

"Our Vortex is not afraid of its past: It has forgotten its existence." (Wyndham Lewis, 1914)

As with Joyce, Beuys and Mark E. Smith, the historians will be arguing about (Percy) Wyndham Lewis until the kingdom comes. 20th-century culture has been kept alive by the irritants which work their way under its skin. In this much, McLuhan's call for "the need for a counter-environment as a means for perceiving the dominant one" required a new century to prove its accuracy. Wyndham Lewis, who could so easily be the subject of a myriad quarterly reviews, has remained a shadowy and mistrusted figure, silhouetted on the banks of the cultural mainstream. As our times appear to demand art terrorist outsiders, Lewis has called the era's bluff by refusing easy routes to fashionable and commercially lucrative acceptance. While Marinetti caught, peeled and ate the orange thrown at him in public disgrace, Wyndham Lewis—unknown to many—continues to ply his trade as a novelist, satirist, poet, critic of literature, philosophy and art, magazine editor, painter, and fly-in-the-ointment.

—“Wyndham Lewis,” Stuart Bailey, *Dot Dot Dot* #11, 2005

PORTRAIT OF WYNDHAM LEWIS



## PORTRAIT OF MARK E. SMITH

Chris Evans, 2005, airbrush painting, 43 × 33 cm

"The Fall have always been at arm's length. That's our mentality." (Mark E. Smith, 1980)

As with Joyce, Beuys, and Wyndham Lewis, the historians will be arguing about Mark E. (for Edward) Smith until the kingdom comes. 20th century culture has been kept alive by the irritants which work their way under its skin. In this much, Wilde's late-Victorian aphorism, "To be great, one must be misunderstood," required a new century to prove its accuracy. Mark E. Smith, who could so easily be the subject of a myriad Sunday supplement profiles, has remained a shadowy and mistrusted figure, silhouetted on the banks of the cultural mainstream. As our times appear to demand art terrorist outsiders, Smith has called the era's bluff by refusing easy routes to fashionable and commercially lucrative acceptance. Whilst Damien Hirst prepares to suspend his Turner Prize in a vat of formaldehyde, Mark E. Smith—unknown to many—continues to ply his trade as an independent musician, philosopher, historian, writer, wit, and fly-in-the-ointment.

—“Mark E. Smith,” Michael Bracewell & Jon Wilde,  
*Dot Dot Dot* #11, 2005

PORTRAIT OF MARK E. SMITH

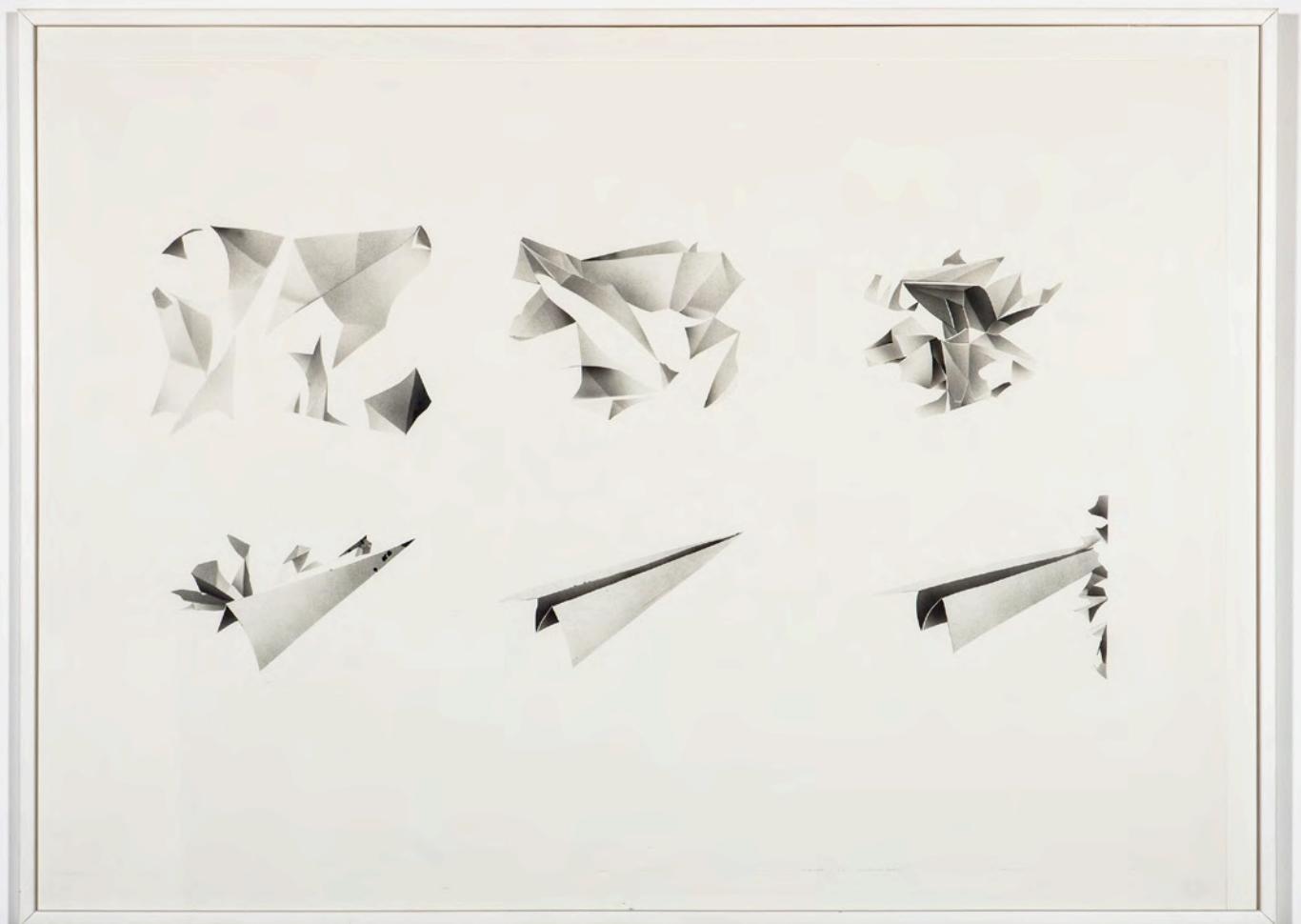


## ART BOOKS NOW

Chris Evans, 2006, airbrush painting, 78 × 107 cm

The book has been said (or thought) to have been rendered obsolete by a sequential series of technological innovations and informational novelties on many occasions: every so often an ambush-like mirage of "new technologies" seems to spell the End of the Age of the Book. In our current time, this mirage has often been construed as a messianic manifestation of digital, i.e. immaterial culture: surely the advent of the computer, of e-books, the Internet, palm tops, and Blackberries would usher in (it was hoped) the End Times of the Paper era. Much like "History," "Man," "Ideology," the "Enlightenment," and—most tellingly, perhaps—"Art," the book has been declared dead many times over, most often precisely because of its (perceived and/or real) obsolescence.

—“Art Books Now: Six Theses,” Dieter Roelstraete,  
*Dot Dot Dot* #12, 2006



## ON 1984 AND BEYOND

Gerard Byrne, 2006, strip of photographs, 104 × 28.2 cm

Published in 1963 across two issues of *Playboy's* interview section, "1984 and Beyond" invited 12 science fiction writers — including Arthur C. Clarke (a regular contributor to *Playboy's* fiction section) Robert Heinlein (author of *Starship Troopers*) and Rod Serling (creator of *The Twilight Zone*) — to talk about their visions of the future of society circa 1984. 42 years later, Gerard Byrne resurrected this article, editing it into a screenplay and re-enacting it with a group of actors in The Netherlands, reworking the piece in two stages, beginning with a live reading, which was developed into a subsequent film.

Where George Orwell's 1949 vision of the future sees a dystopian totalitarian regime, *Playboy's* group of writers see immanent sexual, scientific and social liberation. At the same time they appear steeped in political tensions and social and ideological anxieties surrounding the cold war, their visions of the future simultaneously unfold fears of the present. Opening with a discussion about the Russian-American race for the moon (Clark predicts a moon landing circa 1970, and Venus circa 1980) the writers debate the likelihood of the Russians not only capturing the moon, but the "entire orb," before proceeding to imagine its commercial potential, and to speculate over lunar real estate and tourist travel. Ideological fears of Communism and discussions of racial issues only too easily translate into imagined alien presences, as the writers gauge how their appearance might "horrify humanity," however they conclude that "few aliens are apt to be more startling than man himself."

—“On 1984 and Beyond,” Emily Pethick, *Dot Dot Dot* #13, 2006



## MITIM GAMMA TYPE SPECIMEN

Louis Lüthi & Radim Peško, 2006, silkscreen print, 124 × 89 cm

Third installment of an ongoing typeface design (after Mitim Alpha and Mitim Beta): a fount of maverick symbols, figures, and letters throughout history compiled from various sources including works of art, literature, and design, mathematics, heraldry, comics, music, medicine, film, etc.

—“Mitim Gamma,” Louis Lüthi & Radim Peško, *Dot Dot Dot* #13, 2006



PORTRAIT OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN / TRYING TO FIND FLAWS, IF ANY,  
IN AN ENLARGEMENT OF A SUPERDOLLAR

Photographic print of c. 1770 etching, 2006 / photographic  
enlargement of Tony Law's photograph for *The New York Times*,  
July 23, 2006, 48 × 69.5 cm

As it turns out, today is Benjamin Franklin's 300th birthday. Writer, typographer, printer-publisher-politician, inventor, statesman, gentleman scientist, lover, linguist, librarian and the first Postmaster General of the United States, Franklin was the consummate networker—distributing his ideas far and wide through a dizzying range of practices. He established a network of printing franchises by sending former apprentices to set up shop in a new town and collecting his dues; he traveled extensively to London and the Courts of France fostering relationships and helping to form a nation; he wrote incisive arguments and entertainments under a constellation of pseudonyms to suit the purpose-at-hand including The Causist, Silence Dogood, Busy-Body, Poor Richard, and J.T.; he advocated a paper currency to facilitate liberal distribution of goods and services; he (reportedly) spread his affections among any number of women in the Colonies and beyond; and he published a weekly newspaper, an occasional magazine and the annual *Poor Richard's Almanack*. Along the way, Franklin pursued his polymathic interests while inventing (a partial list): the medical catheter, the Armonica (a musical instrument), the first public lending library, a phonetic alphabet, volunteer fire department, the American Philosophical Society, the circulating stove, swimfins, a university, bifocals, the lightning rod, and the United States Postal Service.

—“Post-Master,” David Reinfurt, *Dot Dot Dot* #12, 2006

VOICEOVER: For over a decade police forces across the world have been hunting a criminal cartel with a license to print money. They've been distributing the highest quality counterfeit notes ever produced. The forgeries are so realistic that even the experts can't tell the difference.

DCI MARK SMITH: They would go through banks, they could be cashed at travel exchanges, bureaux de change, they were that good, that well made, that sophisticated.

VOICEOVER: They're known as superdollars.

VOICE OF SILCOCK: This is made on the same paper, the same ink, the same little colored flecks in the paper. There's that many of them in their economy, it's a joke.

VOICEOVER: For years superdollars have been passing unnoticed in banks throughout the world. Tonight, using exclusive surveillance footage, *Panorama* goes on the trail of the superdollar. We follow the tracks of a counterfeiting cartel around the world, from the rogue states of North Korea ...

—“Superdollars,” David Reinfurt, *Dot Dot Dot* #14, 2007

PORTRAIT OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN / TRYING TO FIND FLAWS, IF ANY,  
IN AN ENLARGEMENT OF A SUPERDOLLAR



## BLAZON 4 MOHOLY-NAGY

Dexter Sinister, 2007, lithographic proof print, 104.5 × 74 cm

In 1922, you ordered by telephone from a sign factory five paintings in porcelain enamel. Years later, describing the situation in some detail, you said:

"I had the factory's color chart before me and I sketched my paintings on graph paper. At the other end of the telephone the factory supervisor had the same kind of paper, divided into squares. He took down the dictated shapes in the correct position."

Originally titled *The Enamels (Emaille)*, these are much better known today as the "Telephone Paintings." There is even considerable doubt in some academic circles whether this story is true—but never mind that. Curtly summarizing the act you said:

"(It was like playing chess by correspondence.)"

[...]

Heraldry is a graphic language evolved from around 1130 AD to identify families, states, and other social groups. Specific visual forms yield specific meanings, and these forms may be combined in an intricate syntax of meaning and representation. Any heraldic device is described by both a written description and its corresponding graphic form.

The set of *a priori* written instructions is called a BLAZON —to give it form is to EMBLAZON.

[...]

The coded crosshatches each represent one of the heraldic colors, properly known as tinctures, using a distinctive vocabulary. For example, repeating diagonal lines top right and bottom left means *vert* (green) or a precise horizontal-vertical grid depicts *sable* (black). You'll notice in this print that your original colors have been conveniently re-coded—*gules*, *sable*, and *or* are refigured as lines, grids, and dots.

On the back cover of this bulletin we have reprinted your painting using only black ink and substituted the heraldic hatchings for your paint colors. We have otherwise tried to remain as faithful to your original intention as possible.

So, we offer this proof back to you, Lázló—as, perhaps, a backwards-blazon. It is a set of instructions working in reverse from the final forms to the words that came first.

—“Blazon 4 Moholy-Nagy,” Dexter Sinister, *Bulletins of The Serving Library* #11, 2016

BLAZON 4 MOHOLY-NAGY



D/S161006

## MONUMENT TO COOPERATION

Will Holder, brass rubbing of a monument found in the Seward Park Social Housing Project, New York City, 2007, wax crayon on paper, 153.2 × 127.2 cm

Any text is woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages, which cut across it through and through in a vast stereophony. The citations that go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable, and yet already read; they are quotations without inverted commas. The kernel, the soul —let us go further and say the substance, the bulk, the actual and valuable material of all human utterances—is plagiarism. For substantially all ideas are secondhand, consciously and unconsciously drawn from a million outside sources, and daily used by the garnerer with a pride and satisfaction born of the superstition that he originated them; whereas there is not a rag of originality about them anywhere except the little discoloration they get from his mental and moral caliber and his temperament, and which is reveded in characteristics of phrasing. Old and new make the warp and woof of every moment. There is no thread that is not a twist of these two strands. By necessity, by proclivity, and by delight, we all quote. Neurological study has lately shown that memory, imagination, and consciousness itself are stitched, quilted, pastiched. If we cut-and-paste ourselves, might we not forgive it of our artworks?

—“The Ecstasy of Influence,” Jonathan Lethem,  
*Dot Dot Dot* #15, 2008

## COOPERATION

COOPERATION MEANS CONCERT FOR THE DIFFUSION OF WEALTH. IT LEAVES NOBODY OUT WHO HELPS TO PRODUCE IT. IT TOUCHES NO MAN'S FORTUNE; IT SEEKS NO PLUNDER; IT CAUSES NO DISTURBANCE IN SOCIETY; IT CONTEMPLATES NO VIOLENCE; IT SUBVERTS NO ORDER . . . IT ACCEPTS NO GIFT NOR ASKS ANY FAVOR; IT KEEPS NO TERMS WITH THE IDLE AND IT WILL BREAK NO FAITH WITH THE INDUSTRIOUS. IT MEANS SELF-HELP, SELF-DEPENDENCE AND SUCH SHARE OF THE COMMON COMPETENCE AS LABOR SHALL EARN OR THOUGHT CAN WIN.

GEORGE JACOB HOLYOAKE  
LONDON, ENGLAND - 1885

COURTESY OF SETH PRICE (MALLARMÉ / BROODTHAERS)

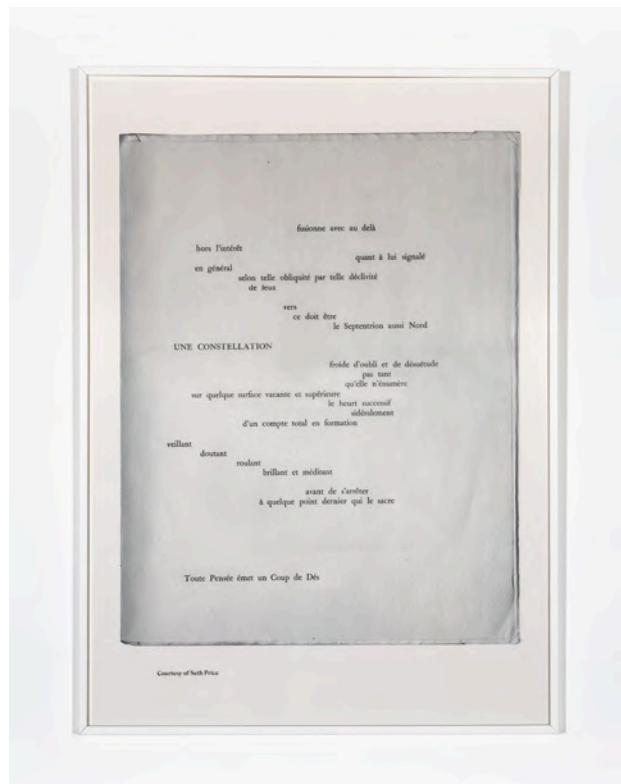
Seth Price & Dexter Sinister, 2007, 2 lithographic proof prints, each 105.5 x 76 cm

You could argue that sampling poisoned the well. On the other hand, it is true that in homeopathic medicine, and sometimes in magic, you put a drop of the bad thing, the thing you fight, into water or some other medium. Sampling may be invasive, negating repetition, disordering us, but then that's the wish of every man, to disorder, to mayhem. You must fight something in order to understand it! Voice sampling, possibly all sampling, gives us a text that is critical of reading.

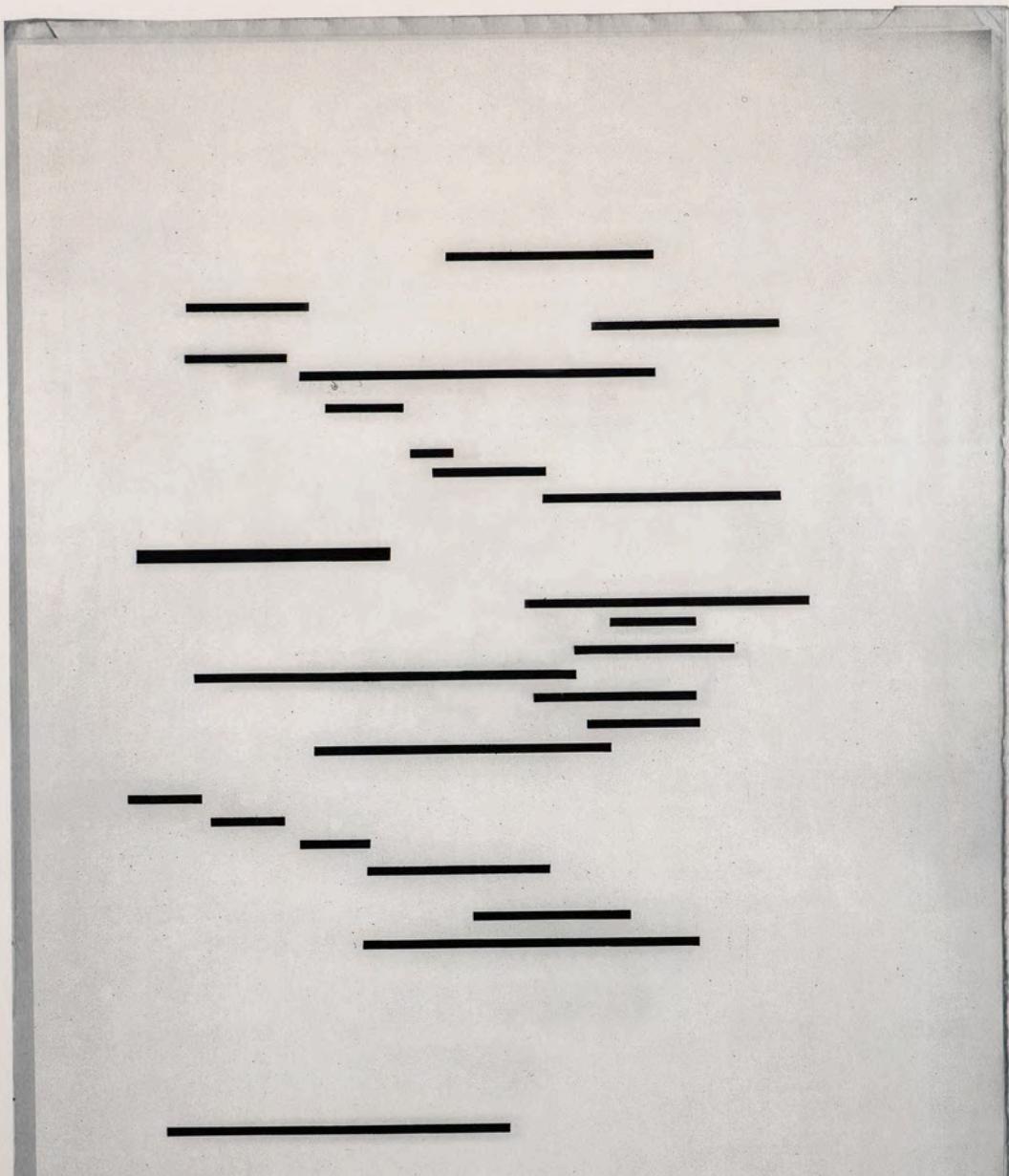
Graffiti performs a similar operation. The gesture of graffiti must preserve that which it seeks to destroy. Were it to entirely efface its object, its particular critique would vanish. None, after all, is worse shod than the shoemaker's wife. The work of Broodthaers occasionally follows this logic, most clearly in his piece *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard*, with its pleasantly incestuous abuse of the Francophone avant-garde. The publication of Mallarmé's poem "Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard," a work distinguished by its typography and disposition of the words upon the page, marked the first time that a poem's conception and meaning were determined through the mechanical printing process. A lyric automation of the design function. In 1969, Broodthaers made a series of pieces that reproduced the exact page layout of Mallarmé's poem, and the layout alone, since he effaced each line of text with a solid black bar. This gesture, while it banished all communicative symbols, retained the striking look and feel of the work. Mallarmé's piece was emptied-out, reduced to seductive packaging. This is a move typical of "appropriation," which may be considered simply an advanced form of packaging.

These depleted forms were engraved onto aluminum plates, as if prepped for mass production, and presented as fine art. Broodthaers claims and then augments Mallarmé's poem to produce a new, third body, a field between the works. The whole is without novelty, save the spacing of one's reading; the blanks, in effect, assume importance. The madness of the "a self-annihilating nothing" prescription. But this was only to be expected, since Broodthaers was an imitation artist. It may be that the supreme triumph of such advanced art is to cast doubt on its own validity, mixing a deep scandalous laughter with the religious spirit. There's a violence in this turn, the same violence that attends graffiti: *Don't think, look!*

—“Décor Holes,” Seth Price, *Dot Dot Dot* #13, 2006



COURTESY OF SETH PRICE (MALLARMÉ / BROODTHAERS)



Courtesy of Seth Price

## SCIENCE, FICTION (ABSTRACT)

Dexter Sinister (after E.C. Large), 2007, lithographic proof print, 107 × 77 cm

While it seems that, professionally at least, Large never really reconciled the division of his scientific and literary work, it is precisely the symbiosis of the two that animates his early fiction today. His writing is defined by a wide-ranging set of interests, temperament and capacity that is equal parts classic and romantic—a duality which extends to any of the parallel dichotomies itemized by Robert M. Pirsig in his *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*: Scientific vs. Artistic, Technical vs. Human, or Rational vs. Emotional. Pirsig sets up these opposites in order to assert that the fundamental misunderstanding, disinformation, mistrust, and hostility that characterize modern societies are rooted in the personal and communal inability to reconcile these two poles:

"Persons tend to think and feel exclusively in one mode or the other, and in doing so tend to misunderstand and underestimate what the other mode is all about. But no one is willing to give up the truth as he sees it, and as far as I know, no one now living has any real reconciliation of these truths or modes. There is no point at which these visions of reality are unified."

— "Science, Fiction," Stuart Bailey, *Dot Dot Dot* #17, 2009

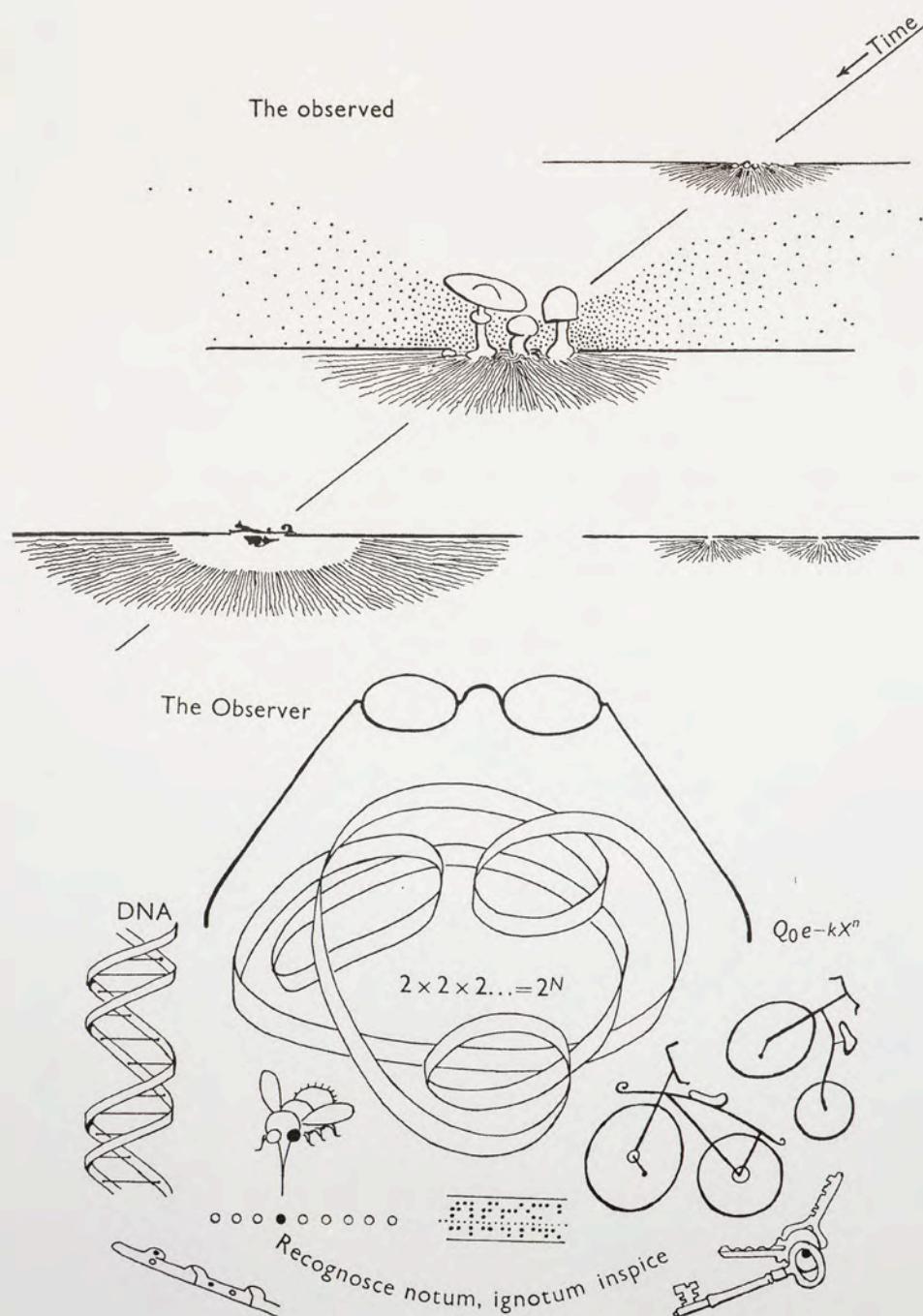


Fig. 1. The Observed and the Observer.

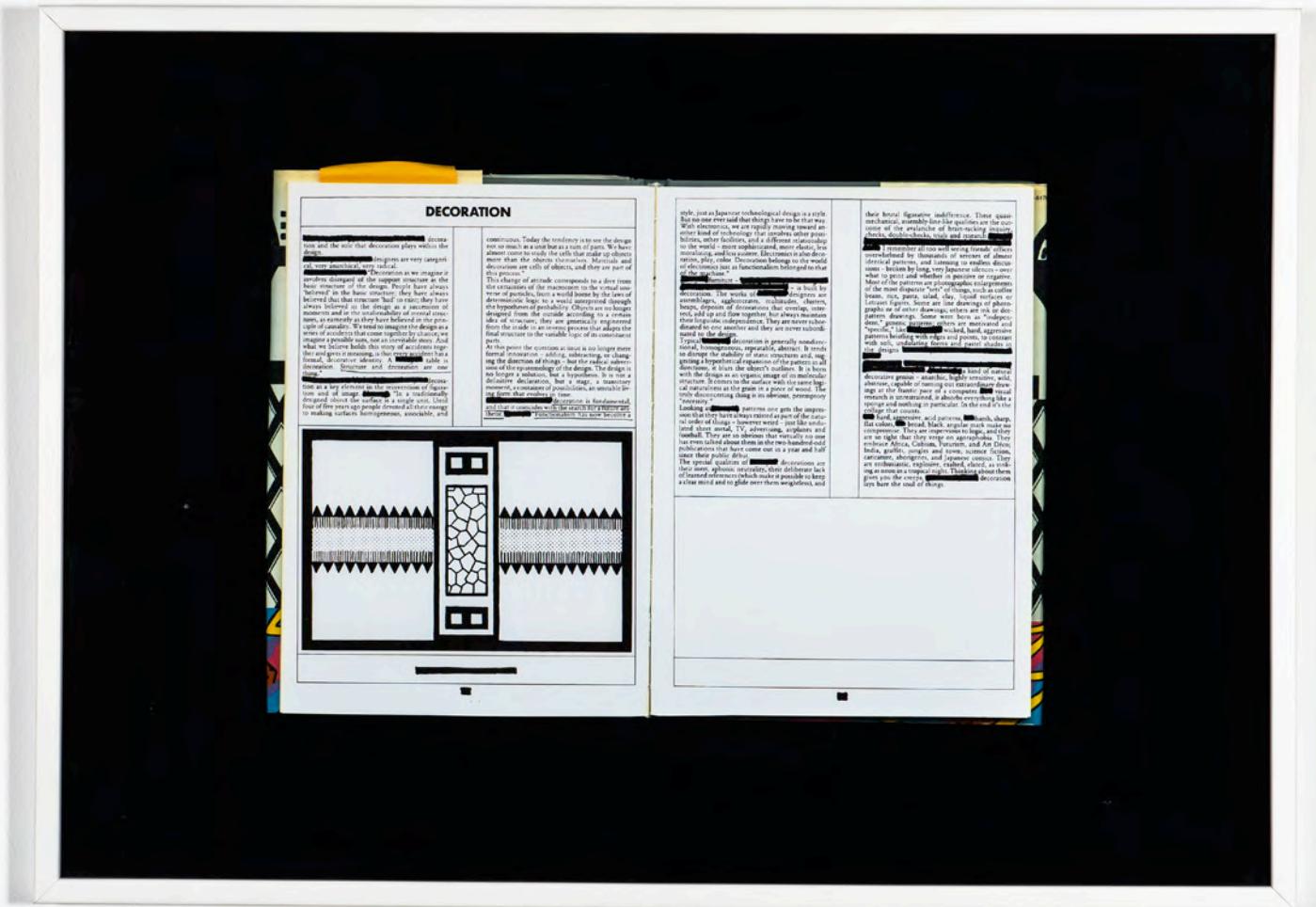
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DECORATION SPREAD FROM MEMPHIS MONOGRAPH (DOCTORED)

Justin Beal, 2007, photographic print, 50 × 70 cm

As an industrial design student I was always irritated by the Memphis Group. They were the awkward ugly chapter in the history of industrial design at the onset of postmodernism; the moment when, to someone whose education followed a specific modernist history, everything was overcome with bad taste and poor judgment. It was a problem: something which clearly developed out of a history of modernist and functionalist design suddenly turned that history on its head. In Memphis's work, the ethics of functionalism are completely denied—materials are used "dishonestly," structure is concealed, and function follows form. Humor and poor taste win out over the gravitas commonly associated with modern design. Now, however, looking at that work from another vantage point—as a sculptor with a certain investment in a history of design—Memphis suddenly seems more like an answer than a problem; an answer to a question which asks how furniture and sculpture might merge.

—“Decoration,” Justin Beal, *Dot Dot Dot* #14, 2007



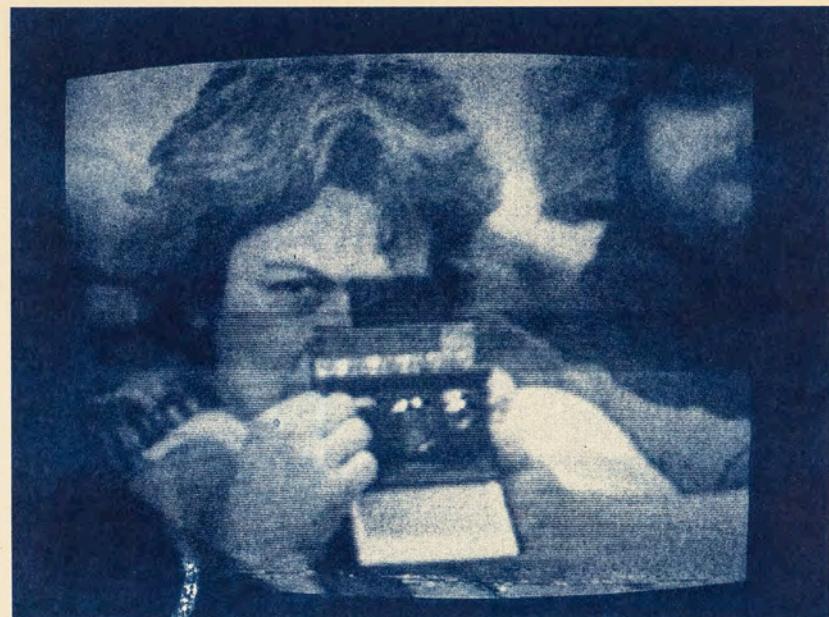
MURIEL COOPER SELF-PORTRAIT WITH POLAROID SX-70, VIDEO IMAGED AND PRINTED  
AT THE VISIBLE LANGUAGE WORKSHOP, 1977

Dexter Sinister (after Muriel Cooper), 2008, stencil print,  
29 × 39.5 cm

We enter more than one room containing stacks of outdated hardware, too difficult to repair, and rotting magnetic-tape formats whose chemical clocks are ticking. I am, of course, struck by the ways in which this recent past becomes so quickly inaccessible in a digital medium. In stark contrast to the piles of posters which provide a visceral record of the Center for Advanced Visual Studies, these dead media provide nothing tangible. As much of Muriel Cooper's most important work was in a digital medium, I become more convinced that accounting for her work is crucial—now.

—“This Stands as a Sketch for the Future,” David Reinfurt,  
*Dot Dot Dot* #15, 2008

MURIEL COOPER SELF-PORTRAIT WITH POLAROID SX-70, VIDEO IMAGED AND PRINTED  
AT THE VISIBLE LANGUAGE WORKSHOP, 1977

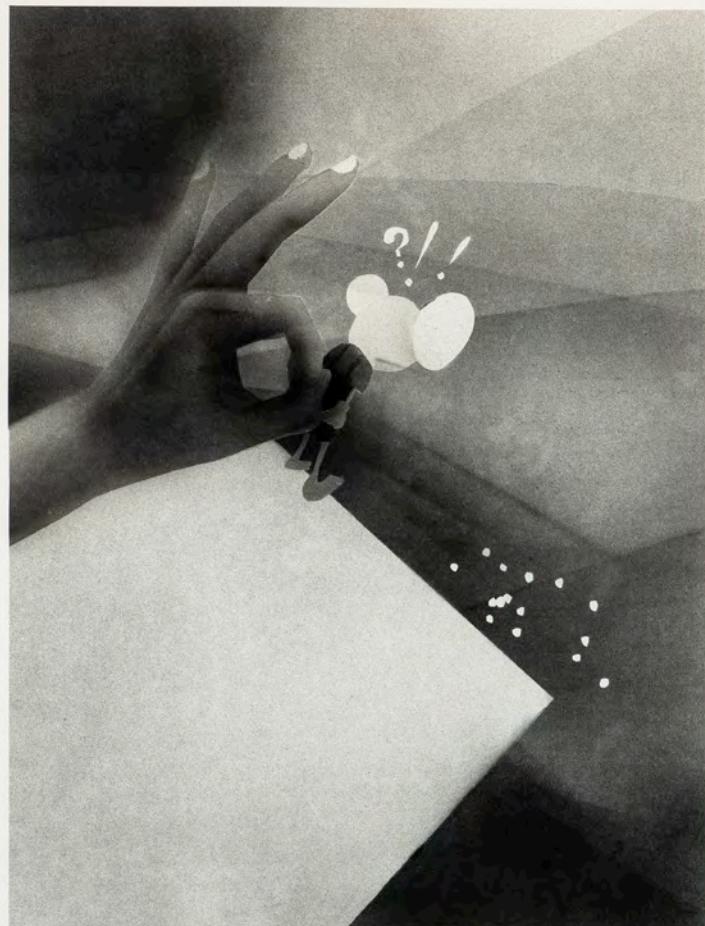


A MMOUSE ABOUT TO ENTER THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

Chris Evans, 2008, airbrush painting, 81.5 × 62 cm

- Back cover of *Dot Dot Dot* #15, 2008

A MMOUSE ABOUT TO ENTER THE PUBLIC DOMAIN



## CALLIGRAPHY FOR EXHAUSTION & EXUBERANCE

Will Holder, 2008, ink and collage on paper, 51.5 × 35 cm

It may be that some of the oldest forms of creative manual labor, such as painting or writing, further the cultivation of a particularly intimate relationship to latent meanings. As you write or paint, words you have read or images you have seen elsewhere (including those which you have forgotten you read or saw) are present in your work as latent memories. The same latencies are at play in the moment of reading or looking at a painting as when the words of the pages you have read before reverberate in the words you presently read, or the images you have been exposed to resonate with what you see when you look at what you presently face. Explicating these latencies by forcing them out onto the page or canvas in their brute actuality would mean to obliterate the deep space of memory that the immanent echoes and delays of the medium generate. How can the potential of these latencies be activated? How do you open up the space of echo and delay?

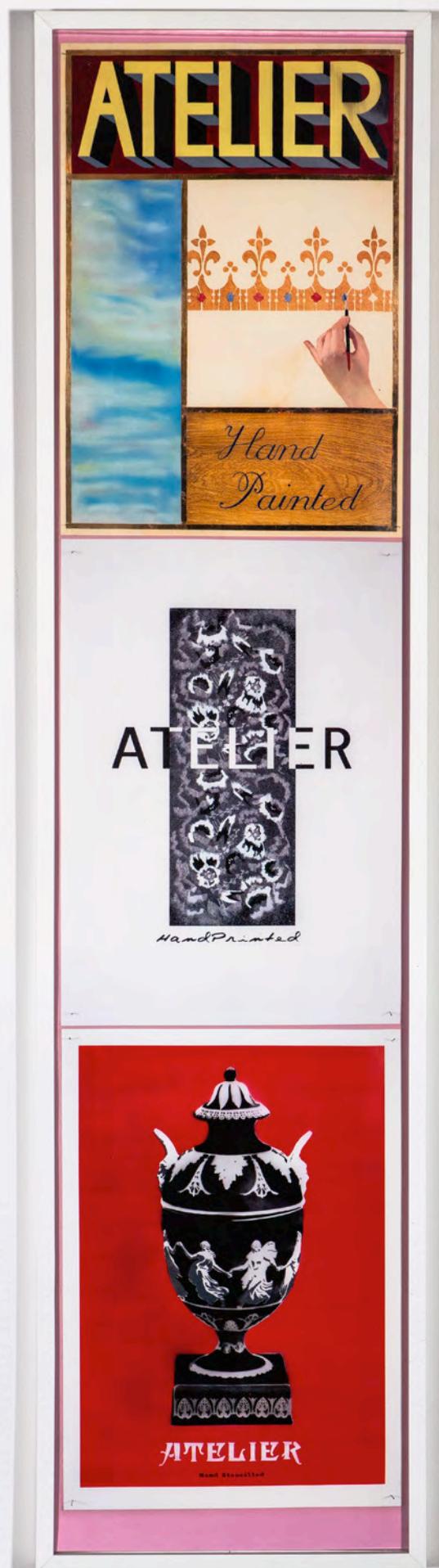
— “Exhaustion & Exuberance,” Jan Verwoert, *Dot Dot Dot* #15, 2008



POSTER FOR ATELIER E.B

Atelier E.B, 2008, lithographic print, 153 × 38.5 cm

—Independent image, *Dot Dot Dot* #20, 2010

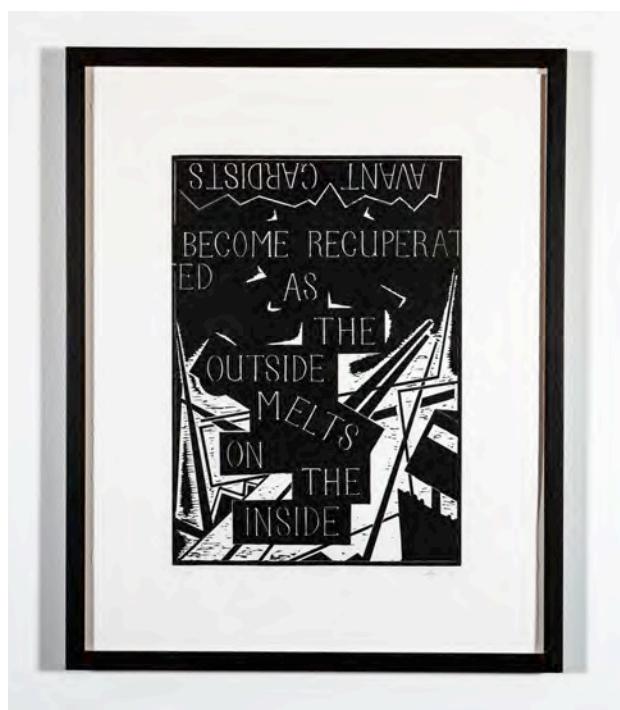


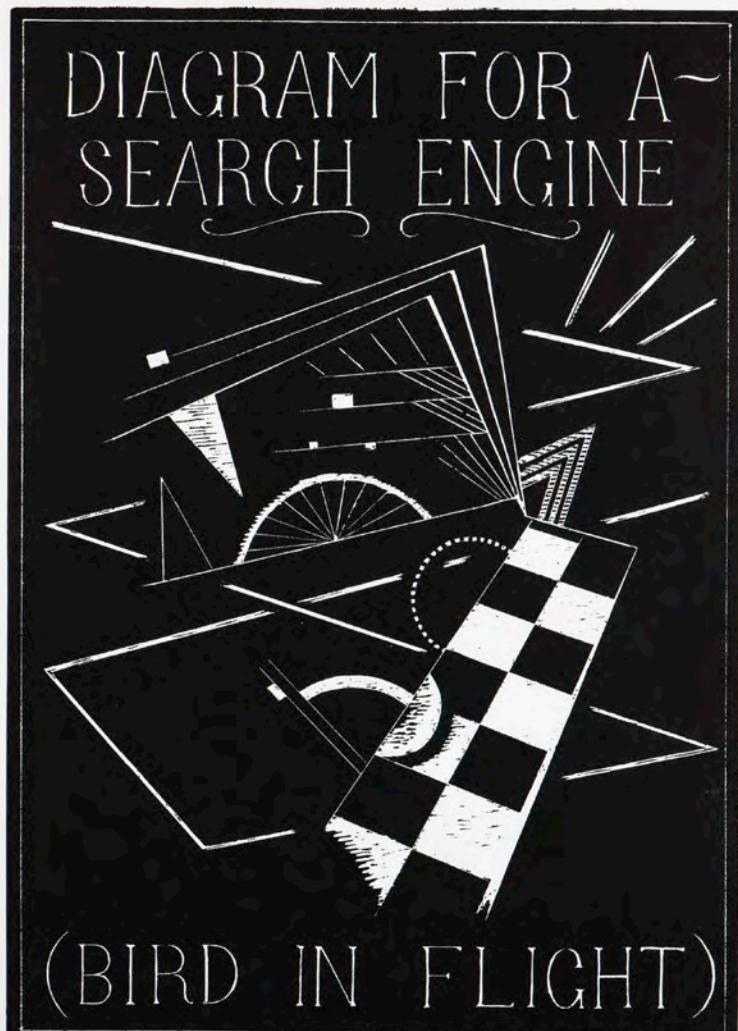
## ANOTHER SHADOW FIGHT

David Osbaldeston, 2008, 3 woodcut prints, each 62.8 × 51 cm

Is it good enough? Is it even art? I don't know. It might look like art, it might even look like contemporary art, but I really don't know if it will be. And to be frank, I don't mind if it isn't, it doesn't change the fact that to me it needs to be done.

—“Another Shadow Fight,” Andrew Hunt & David Osbaldeston, *Dot Dot Dot* #16, 2008





REMARKABLE

Janice Kerbel, 2008, silkscreen print, 160.5 × 108.5 cm

—Independent image, *Dot Dot Dot* #17, 2009

REMARKABLE

# ELEMENTAL PHENOMENON

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## BESHTY'S POSSIBLE TRIANGLE

Walead Beshty, 2008, photogram with inkjet print,  
64.2 × 54.2 cm

In a conversation with László Moholy-Nagy's grandson, I wondered why no-one in the 1920s had thought to make a folded paper photogram. But his grandfather had indeed made such work, he replied, and by calculus of biography pinpointed their existence to 1928, just as he moved to Berlin. The titles of these photograms, he continued, would be highly descriptive and acknowledge their mode of production. And so later I checked but they never existed, they were pure fiction—something that should have happened but didn't until now. A flat sheet of photographic paper folded and exposed, overlaid with Photoshop test images—"quotations" of tools which have now transcended their original function twice—first from a tire designed to demonstrate traction, then from an image of a tyre designed to demonstrate resolution.

—Cover of *Dot Dot Dot* #17, 2009

BESHTY'S POSSIBLE TRIANGLE



GREY PAINTING: TEXT VERSION 2

Philomene Pirecki, 2008, oil on canvas, 35.6 × 25.5 cm

Dear Philomene,

As you know, I'd like to reproduce that deceptively modest painting of yours—the one whose primary colors combine to spell out their composite and form their own frame—on the cover of this last *Dot Dot Dot*.

—“A Word on the Cover,” Stuart Bailey, *Dot Dot Dot* #20,  
2010