

T J Watson 01.04.2017

How one acts depends on how one is.

To be truly responsible for one's actions, one must be responsible for how one is.

But to be responsible for how one is, one must have chosen how one is.

And to be truly responsible for that choice, one must have chosen how one was before that. And before that. And before that. Ad infinitum.

There is no ultimate self-determination. There is no ultimate responsibility.

The work here documented was produced with the aid of random selection and random deselection; it consists of posters, designed and printed, framed and remade.

To construct the work, numerical values were attributed to a library of readily available webfonts and to each colour in Pantone's "Solid Coated" colour library. A random number generator was then used to select typefaces, typeface colours and background colours. Randomly generated numerical values were further used to select the text's height and width; likewise, the text's vertical and horizontal position on a 60" x 40" poster. Accordingly, data sets were made for eight poster designs. (See Fig.3.)

Using Adobe software, plain text designs were constructed in accordance with the data sets. (See Fig. 2.) Of the eight randomly designed posters, four were selected – again, with the aid of random number generation – to be printed as advertisements. Subsequently, the posters were erected for several weeks in sites favoured by the culture industry, used characteristically to promote events; one poster was neighboured by Spotify and Tate Modern. (See Fig.1.)

Two of the four erected adverts were then randomly selected and remade as more conventional art, or gallery, objects, fabricated from paint, wood, glue and paper.

Though the poster designs were generated at random, the text included was not. The text is a paraphrased rendering of analytic philosopher Galen Strawson's basic argument: a well-known philosophical repudiation of commonsensical "freedom", there articulated as ultimate responsibility. In its original form, the argument is delivered in numbered premises, as is typical of Anglophone philosophy. As such, it appears as a self-contained, *a priori* and logically verifiable proof. For the poster, however, this text was condensed and rewritten in a colloquial idiom more befitting of a public advertisement.

Within analytic philosophy, numerous works have rejected or contested the idea of ultimate individual responsibility. Though this literature is riven with differences in argument and tenor, a hesitancy regarding the widespread promulgation of "unfreedom" unites much of it. Several authors have explicitly claimed that their work ought not to be read as an injunction to depart from the norms of EuroAmerican life. Thus, the hardened proposition of freedom's absence surfaces as a well-mannered and private affair.

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Vanishing Mediation

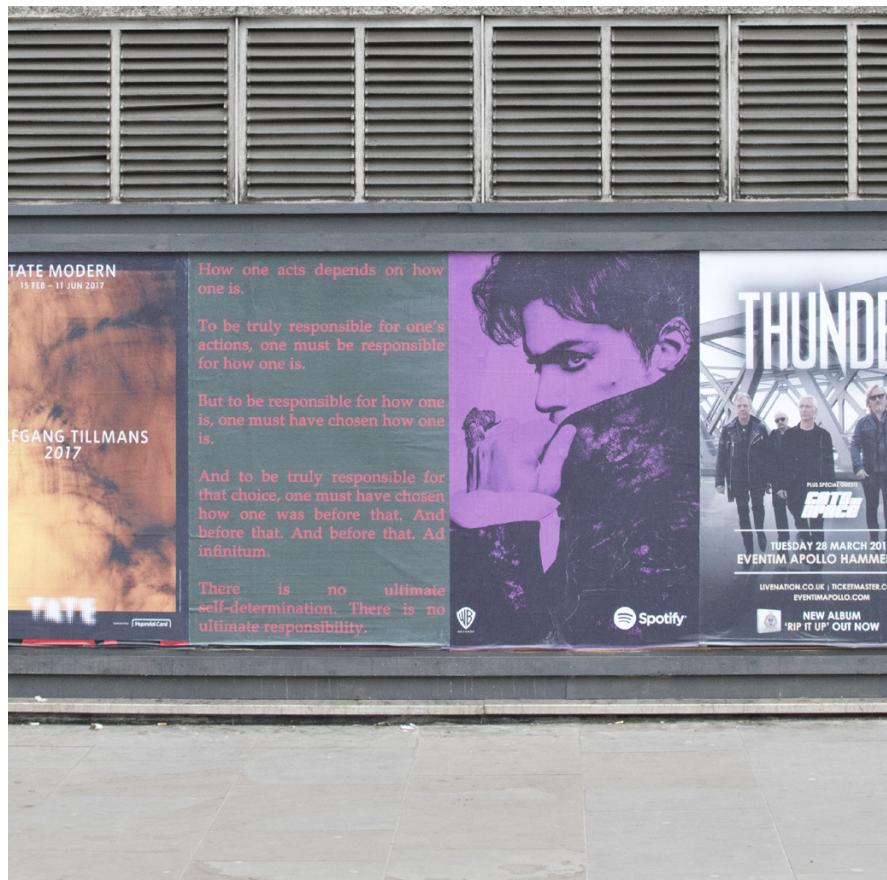
Wood, paint, paper
Two objects, both 175 x 120 x 5cm
2017

FIG. 1



1/4, Kings Cross Rd, WC1X 9BN

FIG. 1



2/4, Blackfriars Rd, SE1 8NN

FIG. 1



3/4, Caledonian Rd, N7 9RB

FIG. 1



4/4, St Pauls Rd, N1 2LL

FIG. 2

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FIG. 2

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FIG. 2

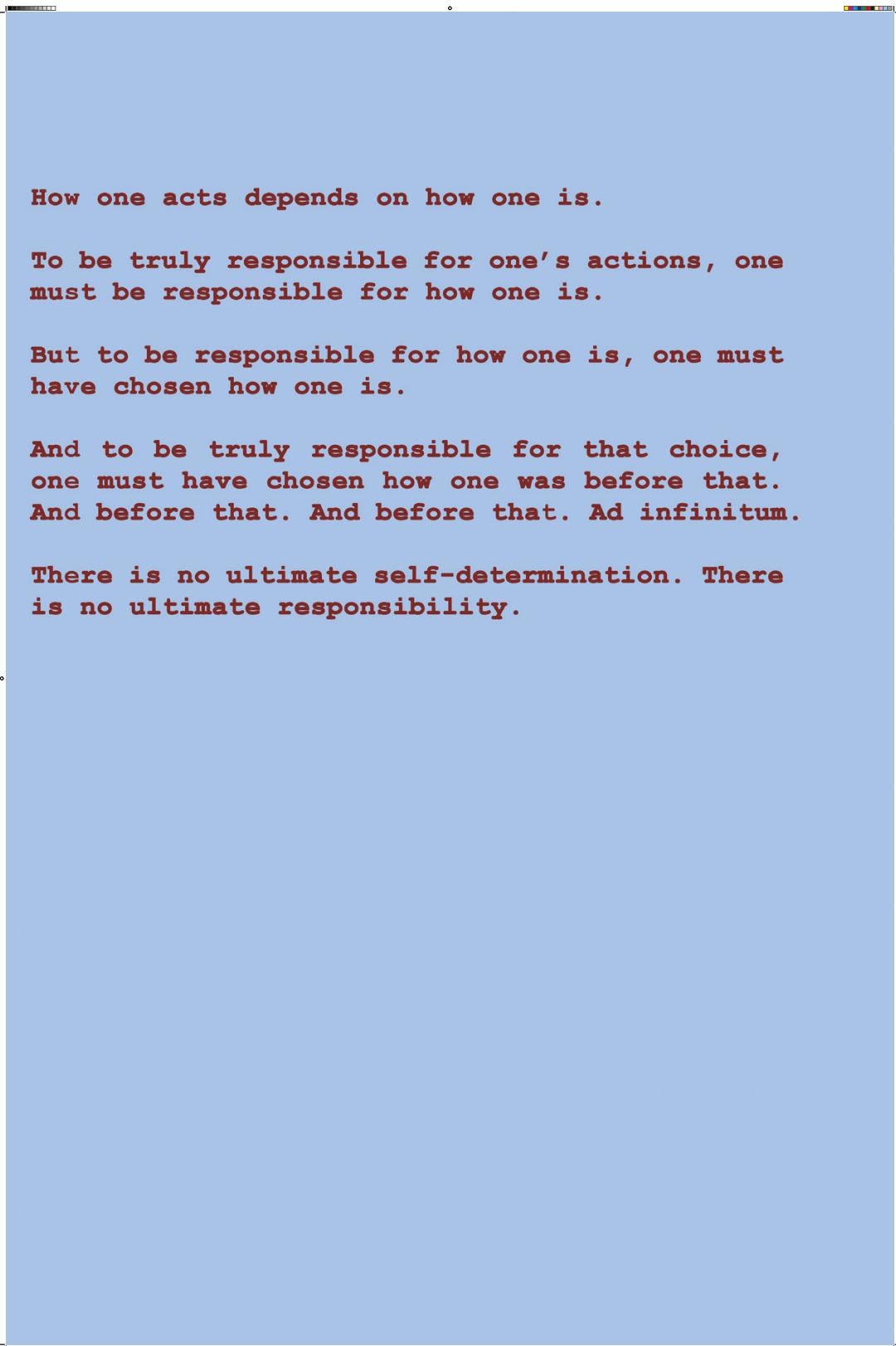


FIG. 3

Design No.	Typeface (1-28)	Typeface Colour	Background Colour	Height (cm)	Width (cm)	Position (X Axis, cm)	Position (Y Axis, inverted, cm)
1	5 <i>Comic Sans MS</i>	83	661	90	52	17	27
2	20 Tahoma	1120	17	113	77	22	38
3	15 <i>Lucida Sans Unicode</i>	180	342	77	40	44	70
4	17 <i>Palatino Linotype</i>	71	925	40	98	1	7
5	3 Arial Black	798	992	86	99	3	14
6	24 <i>Trebuchet MS</i>	649	239	151	70	10	0
7	17 <i>Palatino Linotype</i>	4	766	142	96	4	5
8	8 Courier New	144	316	49	86	3	20

