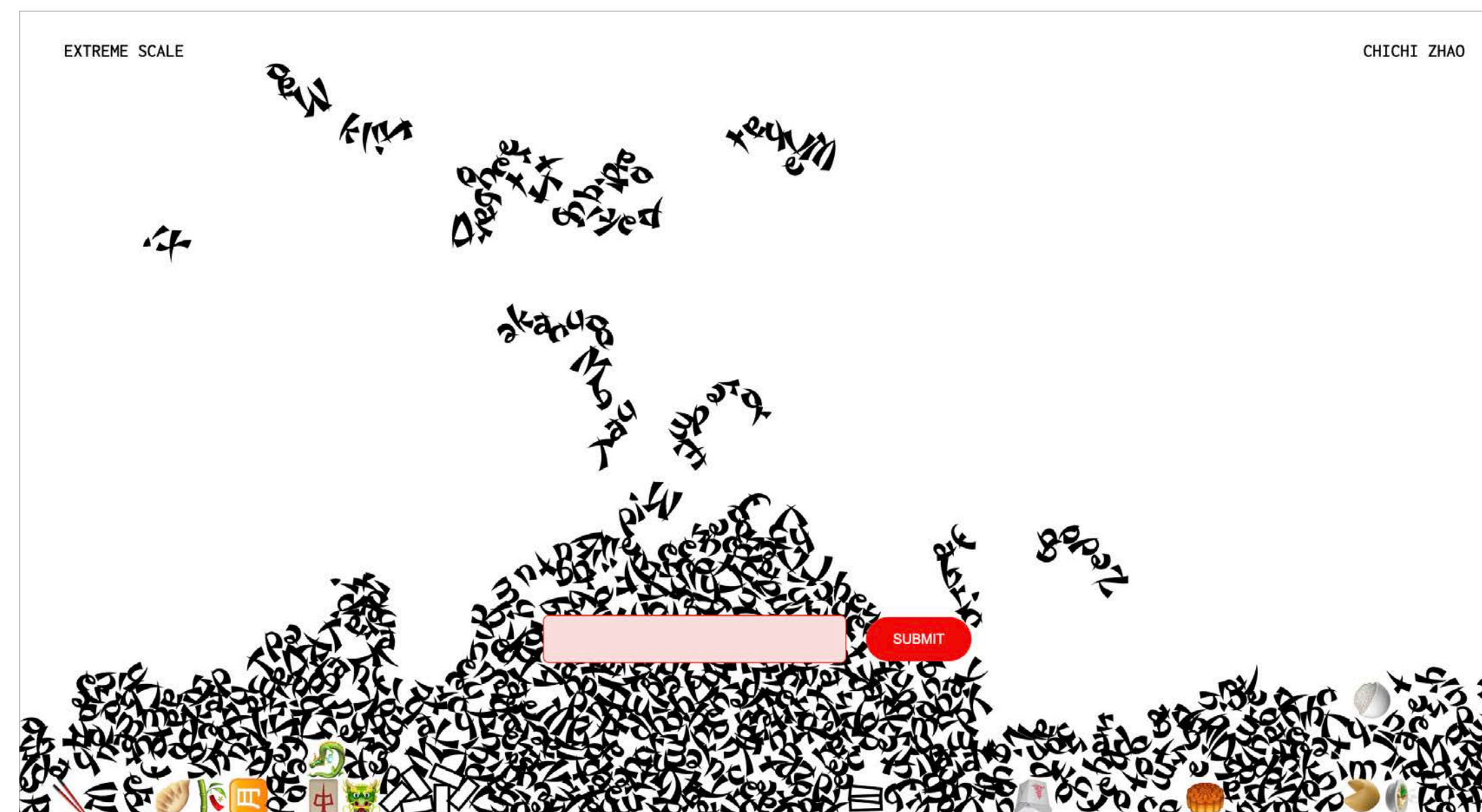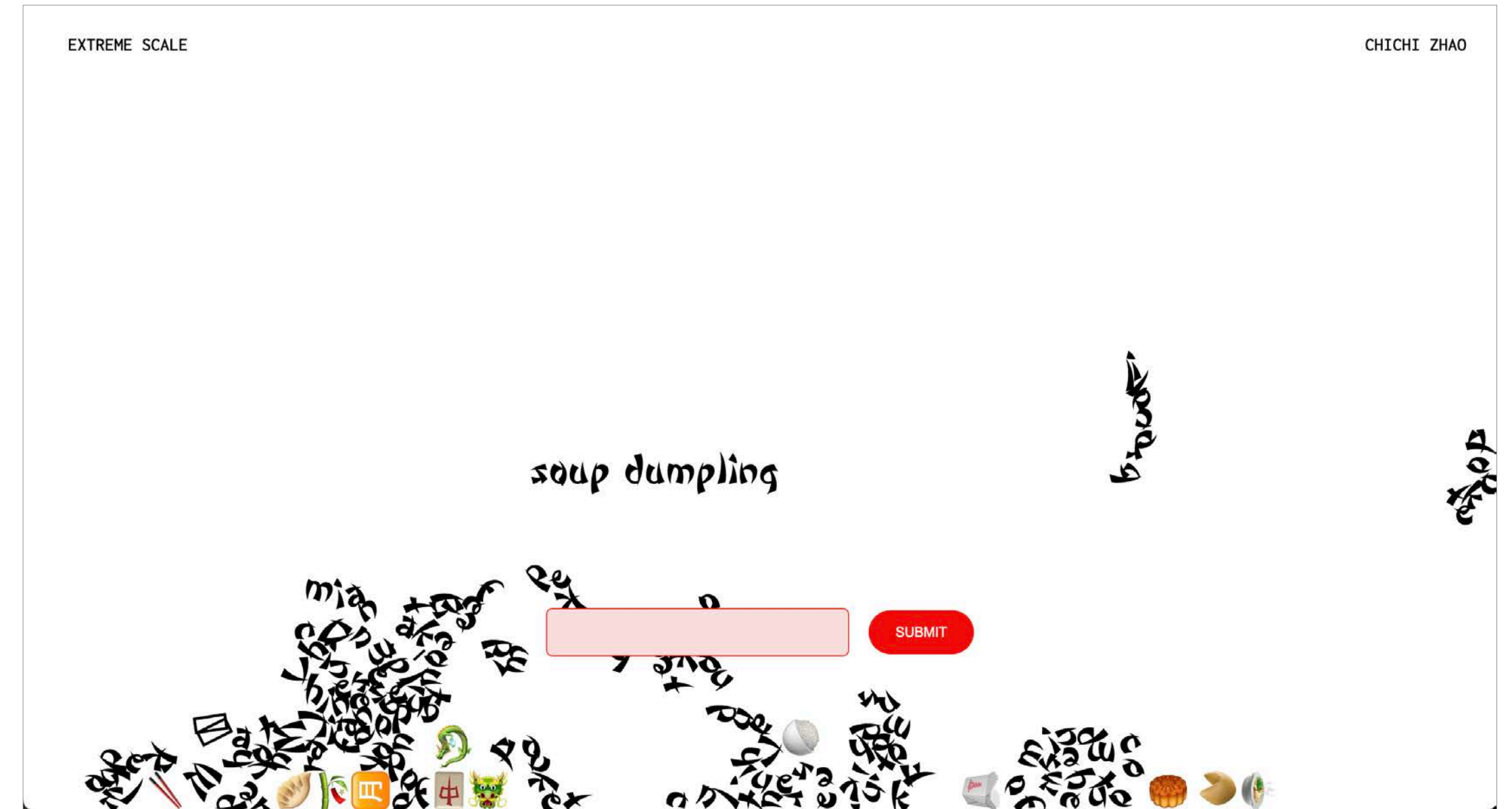# Chichi Zhao

SELECTED WORKS 2023-2025

1. Extreme Scale

What Do You Think of When You Hear Chinese Culture?

This interactive website encourages reflection on the perception and representation of Chinese cultural elements. Through playful emoji-like symbols of familiar icons, it examines the balance between cultural authenticity and appropriation. Users engage with floating icons and input answers to reveal hidden meanings, challenging how design influences our understanding of cultural identity.

EXTREME SCALE   CHICHI ZHAO

What comes to your mind when you think of Chinese culture?

SUBMIT

EXTREME SCALE   CHICHI ZHAO

soup dumpling

SUBMIT

EXTREME SCALE   CHICHI ZHAO

SUBMIT

EXTREME SCALE   CHICHI ZHAO

SUBMIT

2. 50 Questions

This project develops a research methodology through conceptual and formal questioning to guide my design practice. The process begins with generating and refining a series of questions that explore personal and professional themes, serving as a foundation for creative exploration.

The second phase involves designing a printed poster to visualize the top 50 questions. This poster will not only present the questions but also reveal the themes, patterns, and connections discovered throughout the inquiry. The final design reflects a thoughtful synthesis of ideas, showcasing how questions can shape and inspire a deeper understanding of design and life.

50 QUESTIONS
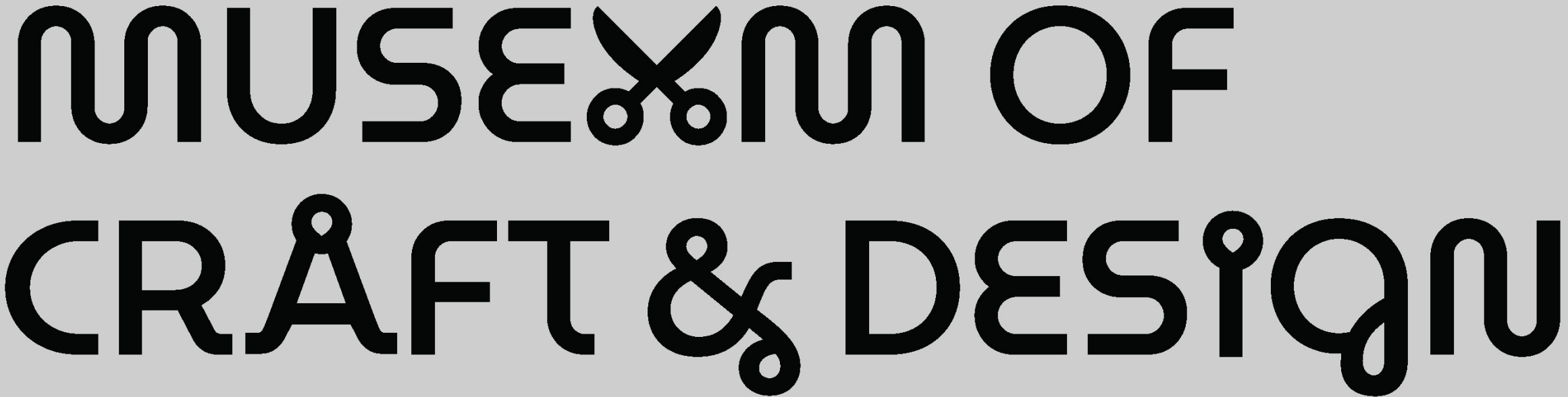
BETWEEN LINES AND

文化 CULTURE 界限
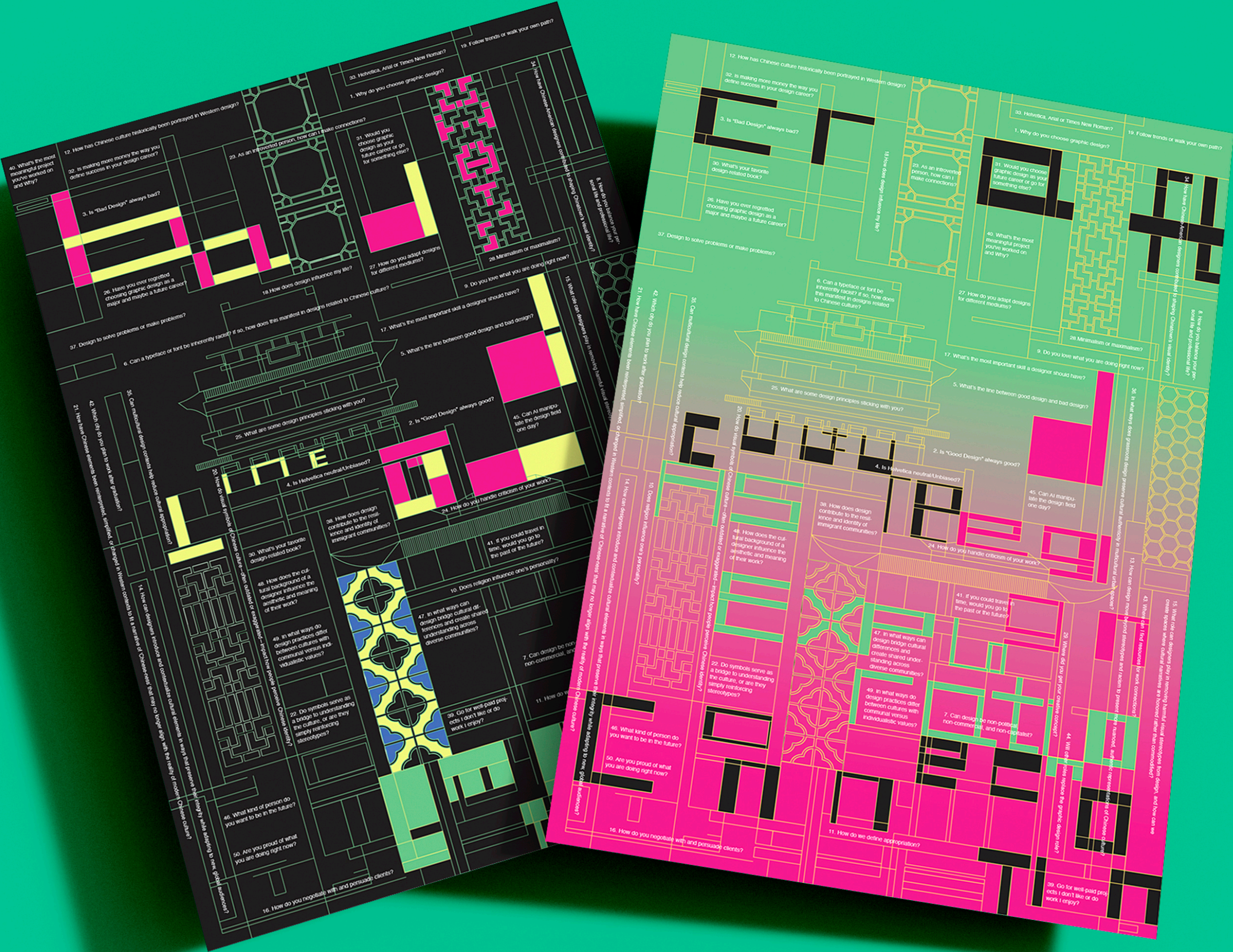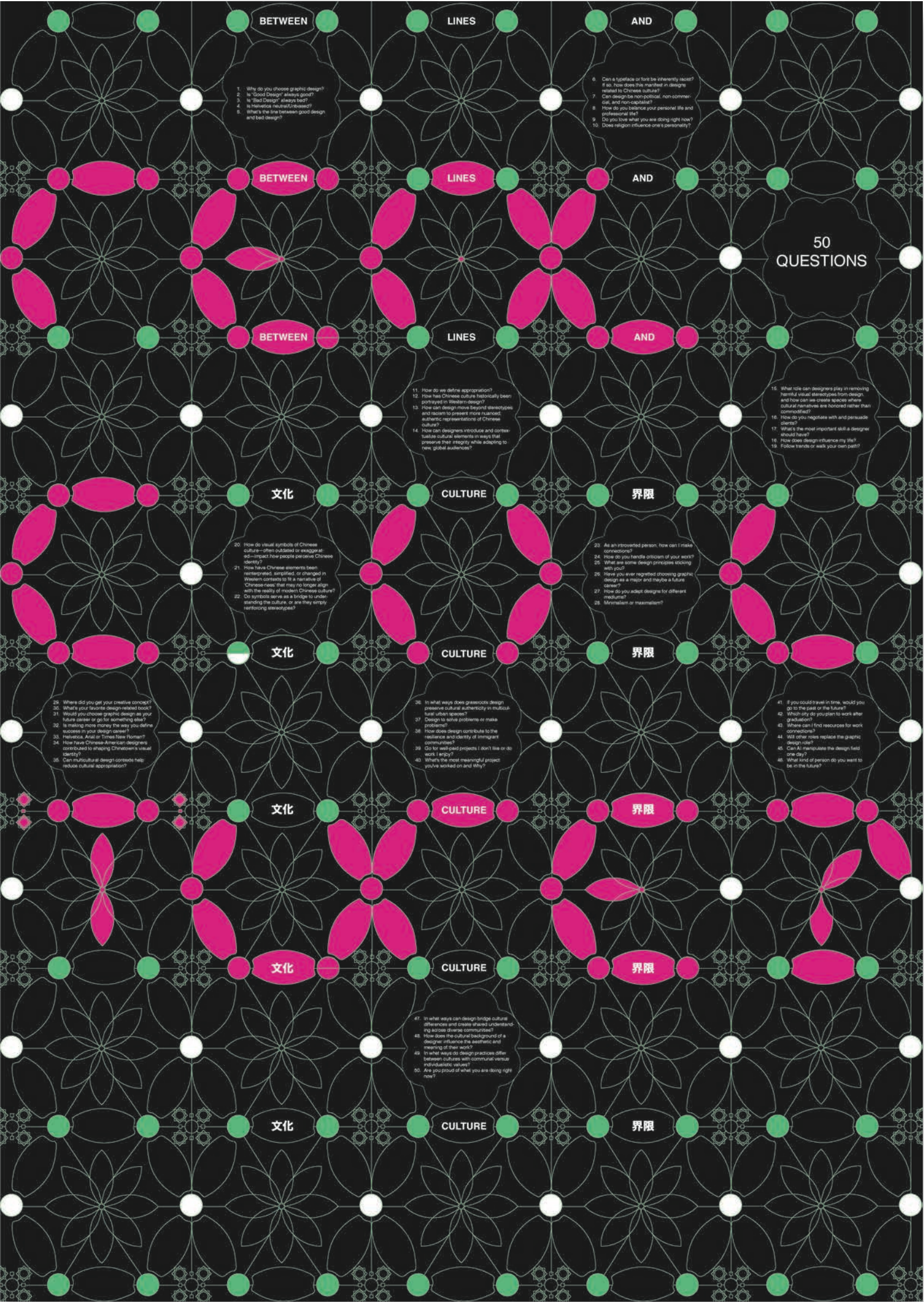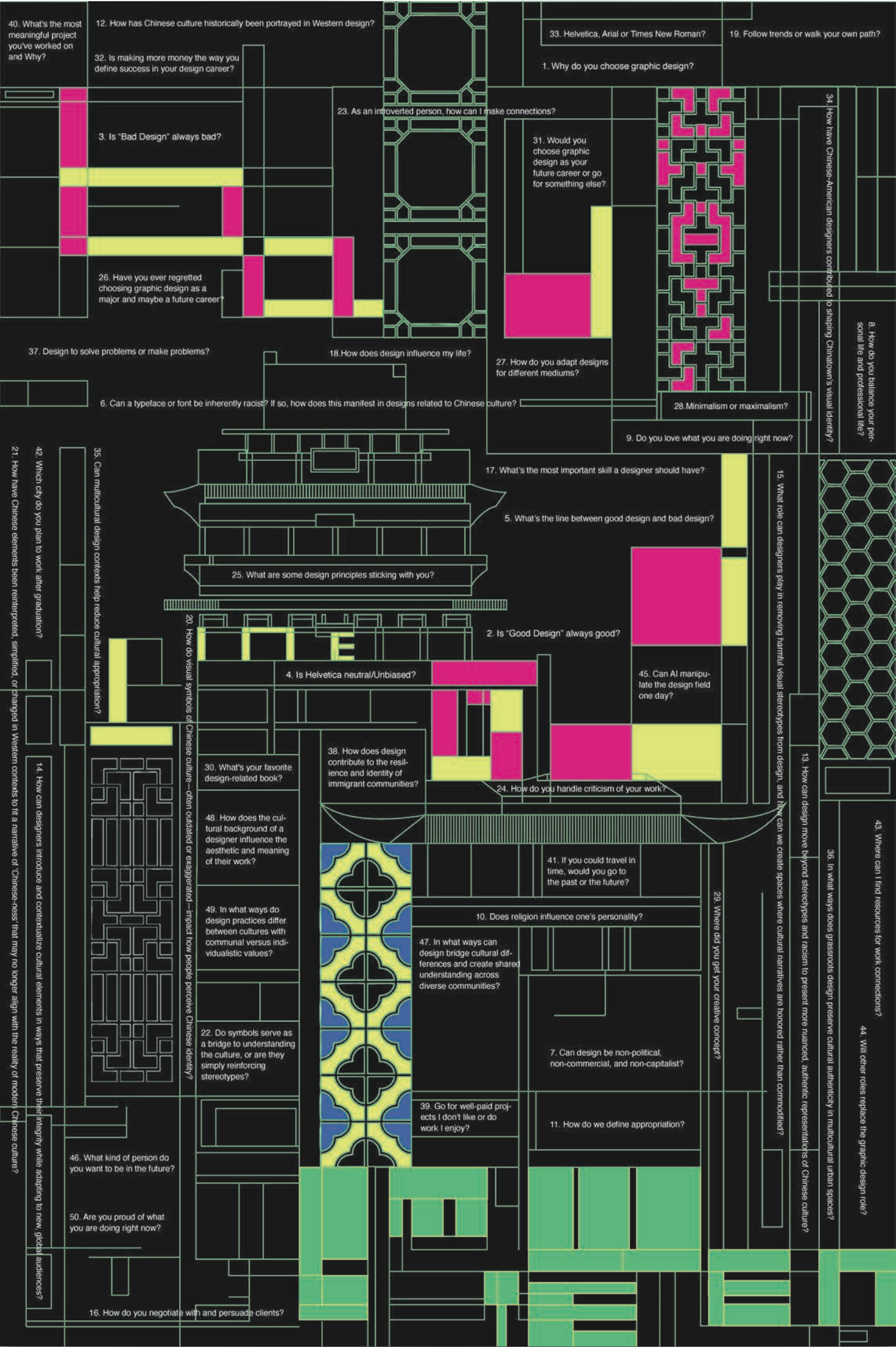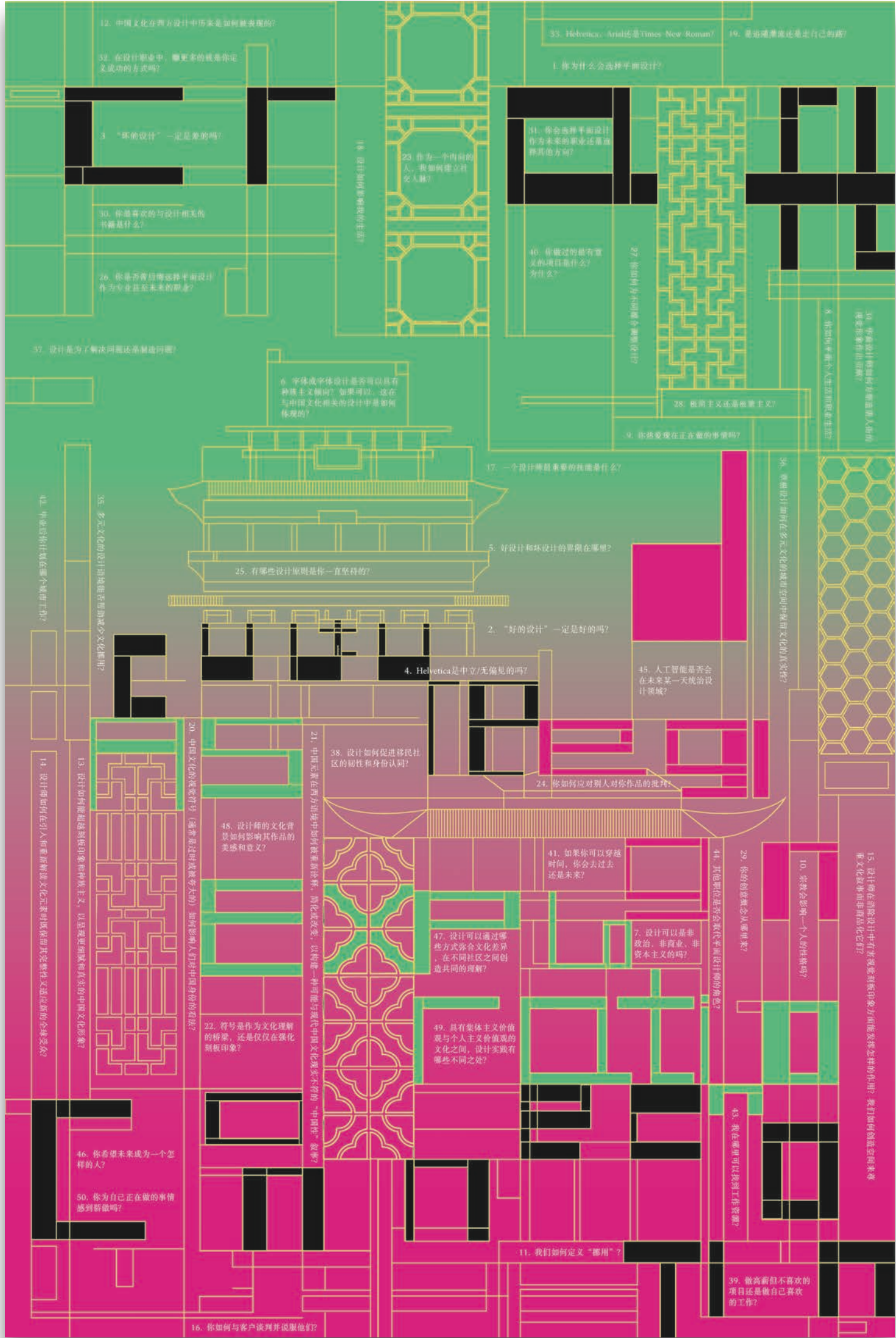
3. Museum of Craft & Design

This project reimagines the visual identity of the Museum of Craft and Design (MOCD), emphasizing its mission to inspire creativity and inclusivity. The rebranding features a logo design inspired by craft materials and organic shapes, using neutral earth tones to evoke a grounded and approachable feel.

The campaign introduces the tagline "MO' Craft + Design For All," celebrating the museum's accessibility and creative spirit. Vibrant visuals and the prefix "MO'" (e.g., MO' Making, MO' Crafting) create a cohesive branding system, extending to merchandise, digital platforms, and promotional materials. The rebrand highlights the museum's role as a dynamic space for craft and design exploration, fostering engagement across diverse audiences.

MO' Craft + Design For All

SOFT BEIGE
#DCCDC3
C:00 M:07 Y:11 K:14
PANTONE P 51-2 U

NATURAL PAPER

REDDISH BROWN
#B44C31
C:00 M:58 Y:73 K:29
PANTONE 1675 XGC

CLAY POTTERY

MIDDLE GREY
#444A54
C:19 M:12 Y:00 K:03
PANTONE 19-4108 TPG

STONE, CEMENT

UNBLEACHED COTTON

DUSTY BEIGE
#D59A71
C:00 M:2B Y:47 K:16
PANTONE P 35-3 C

LINEN FABRIC

RAW WOOD

Primary Logo

MUSEUM OF CRAFT & DESIGN

Secondary Logo

MOCD

Logo Variation

MUSEUM OF CRAFT & DESIGN

Tagline

MO' Craft + Design For All

MUSEXM OF CRÅFT & DESIQN

Welcome to MOCD

At the Museum of Craft and Design, creativity is boundless, and every visitor brings their own spark of inspiration.

Our MO' campaign invites you to explore the idea of "More"—more making, more innovation, more collaboration, and more possibilities.

What does MO' mean to you?

Share your voice and write your MO' + ___ and become part of a collective expression of creativity and design.

Together, let's celebrate MO' Moments, MO' Ideas, and MO' Connections. Make Craft + Design For All.

MO' ___
MO' CRAFT
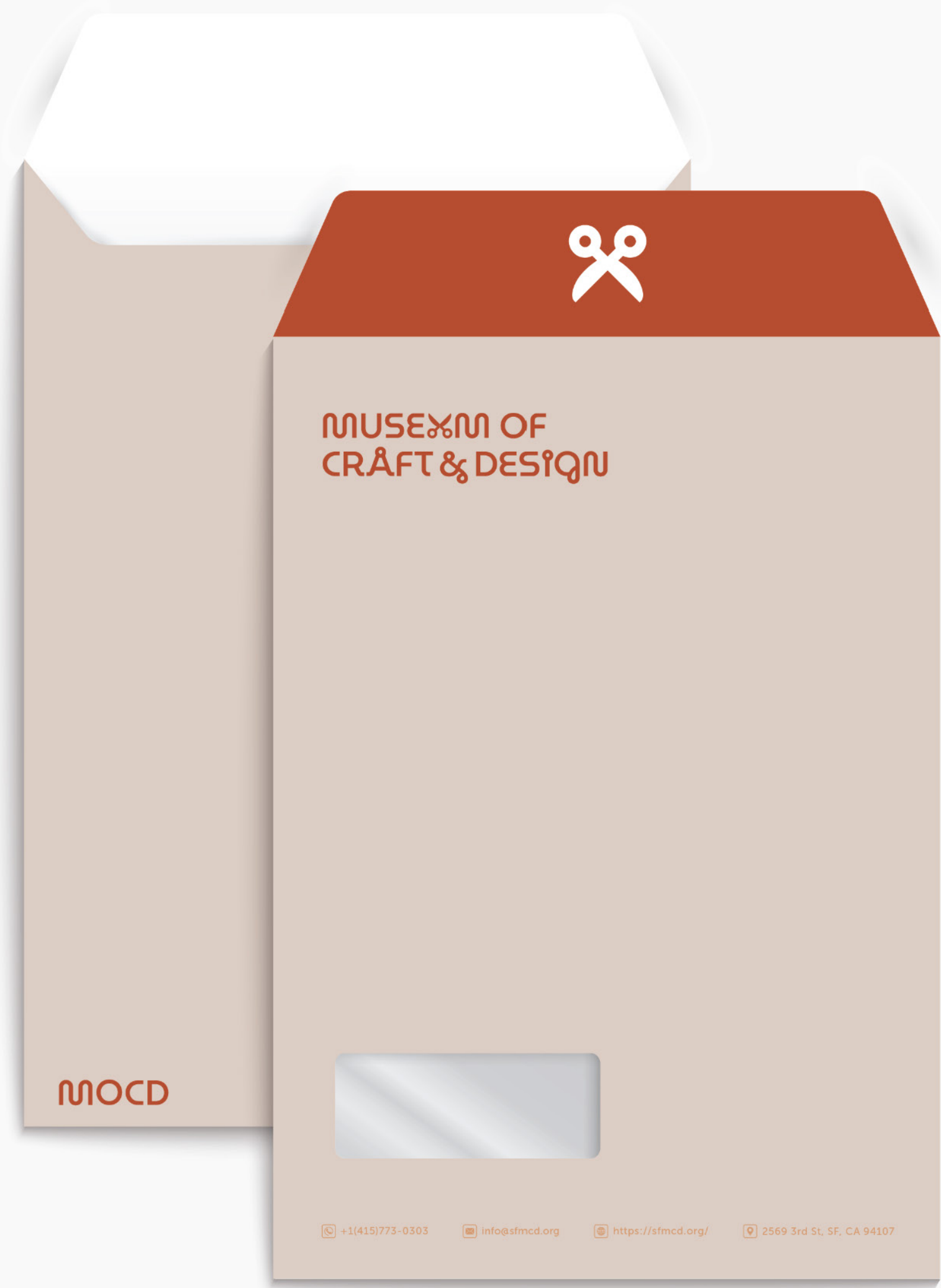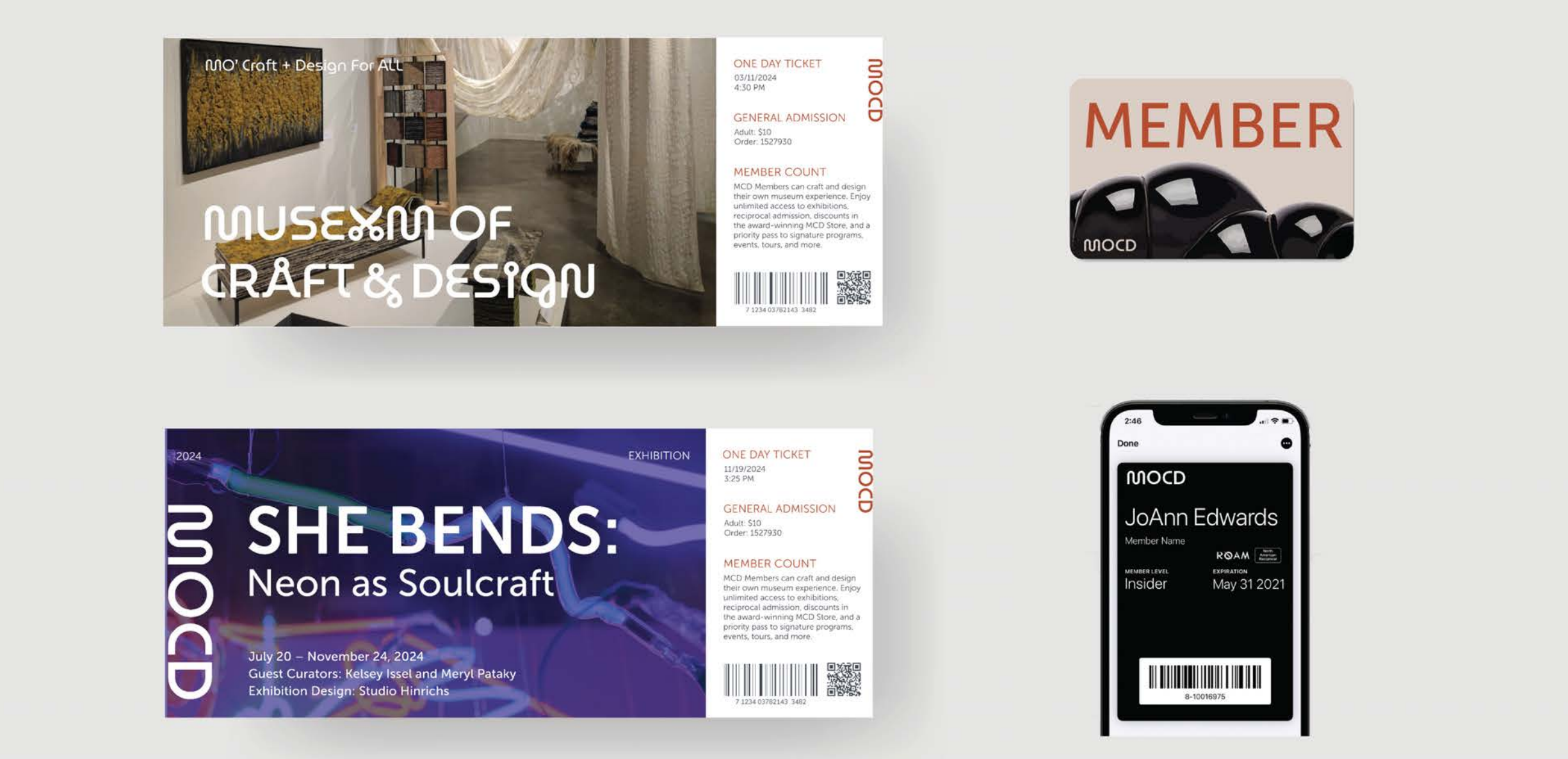MO' DESIGN
MO' CURIOSITY
MO' MAKINQ
MO' INNOVA
MO' ...

The MOCD wayfinding system uses wooden signage to align with the connection to craft and sustainability. Rounded icons and consistent typography maintain a cohesive and approachable design.

MUSEXM OF
CRÅFT & DESIGN

MOCD

MUSEXM OF
CRÅFT & DESIGN

MOCD

+1(415)773-0303   info@sfmcd.org   https://sfmcd.org/   2569 3rd St, SF, CA 94107

MUSEXM OF
CRÅFT & DESIGN

Mark Jokowow
6598 West media spancer, usa-568

Date
December 25, 2025

Dear Mark Jokowow,

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Pellentesque
facilisis sollicitudin ante. Pellentesque habitant morbi tristique senectus et
netus et malesuada fames ac turpis egestas. Nunc feugiat tortor nunc, quis
feugiat lectus mattis sit amet. Nunc urna velit, convallis scelerisque odio
non, pulvinar tincidunt massa. Proin pulvinar lacus at ex auctor consequat.
Maecenas eleifend tempus posuere.

Aliquam non pretium metus. Mauris nibh velit, molestie et lorem quis,
hendrerit lacinia nunc. Donec in dignissim augue. Curabitur vitae erat nisi.
Vestibulum ante ipsum primis in faucibus orci luctus et ultrices posuere
cubilia Curae; Aliquam blandit magna ac augue placerat luctus. Ut et
vehicula odio. Vivamus tincidunt diam diam, sed facilisis lectus pretium
quis. Sed vel mi accumsan, luctus metus vel, congue ex.

Curabitur non tristique tellus. Nam maximus fermentum metus sit amet
luctus. Cras semper nunc id urna lacinia, in interdum quam mollis. Mauris
sit amet eros vel lorem facilisis semper non ac nunc. Curabitur ornare
suscipit lacus. Duis sit amet lectus vitae nulla consectetur ullamcorper
vitae id urna. Sed dictum at lectus eget vehicula.

Suscipit pellentesque orci eu bibendum. Integer pellentesque fringilla
lacus id elementum. Quisque purus risus, blandit quis iaculis vehicula,
rutrum id felis.

Sincerely,

John Watson

John Watson | *Managing Director*

MOCD
6598 West media spancer, usa-568
Markj@gmail.com
+1-222-333-444

MOCD

+1(415)773-0303   info@sfmcd.org   https://sfmcd.org/   2569 3rd St, SF, CA 94107

MOCD

JOHN WATSON
MANAGING DIRECTOR

⚲ 2569 3RD ST, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107
✉ MOCD@MAIL.COM
◔ SMOCD.ORG
☎ 1 215 773 0303

MOCD

MUSEXM OF
CRÅFT & DESIGN

4. Snapshots

The Research & Publish book compiles weekly research posts and semester-long projects from the Grad Design course. Instead of a single volume, the project embraces a modular approach with six distinct booklets dedicated to research topics and a comprehensive book for design projects, ensuring a structured and in-depth presentation.

Snapshots: Research Publication 7 in 1 Book Structure

Snapshot Spreads

Snapshot Spreads

54

Liminality & Transition

Expanding the boundaries of typography and transition, the "Liminality" project now incorporates the laser cut and the unpredictability of physical materials. In this experiment, different styles of the letter 'A' are laser-cut into acrylic boards. These variations range from bold, heavy strokes to delicate, hairline forms, creating diverse templates for further artistic exploration. Inspired by Li Binyuan, a performance artist from China, I decided to use spray foam as the medium to interact with stencils. Utilizing these acrylic stencils, the experiment involves the application of spray foam within the hollow contours of each 'A'. The foam, known for its rapid expansion and hardening properties, begins to inflate and adapt to the confines of the acrylic mold. Within seconds, what begins as a simple chemical reaction transforms into a tangible, three-dimensional letter. The resulting pieces showcase how materials can be manipulated both the shape and the spirit of the stencil design. The resulting pieces showcase how materials can be manipulated to fill and exceed the spaces defined for them, reflecting on the nature of boundaries and the potential beyond them.

55

Liminality & Transition

Foam Experiment

5. Transition & Liminality

This project examines liminality through Einstein's Dreams (May 14, 1905) and the interactive software Random Actor. In this world, time expands outward in accelerating concentric circles, with the center frozen in stillness—a literal threshold where life pauses. This contrasts with linear or cyclical time, offering a metaphorical lens to explore transitions, ambiguity, and disorientation in liminal states.

Final Experimental Book
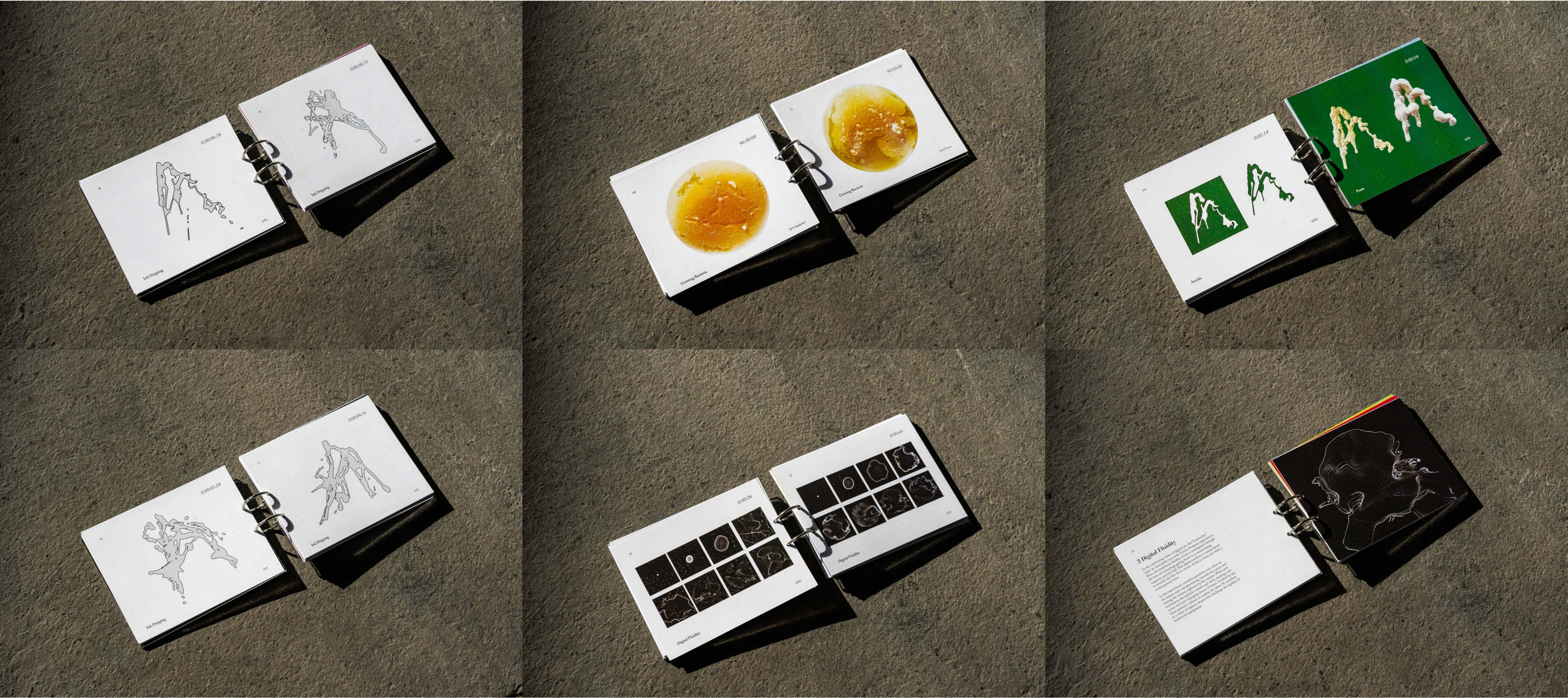
Laser Cut Acrylic Letter A with Spraying Foam
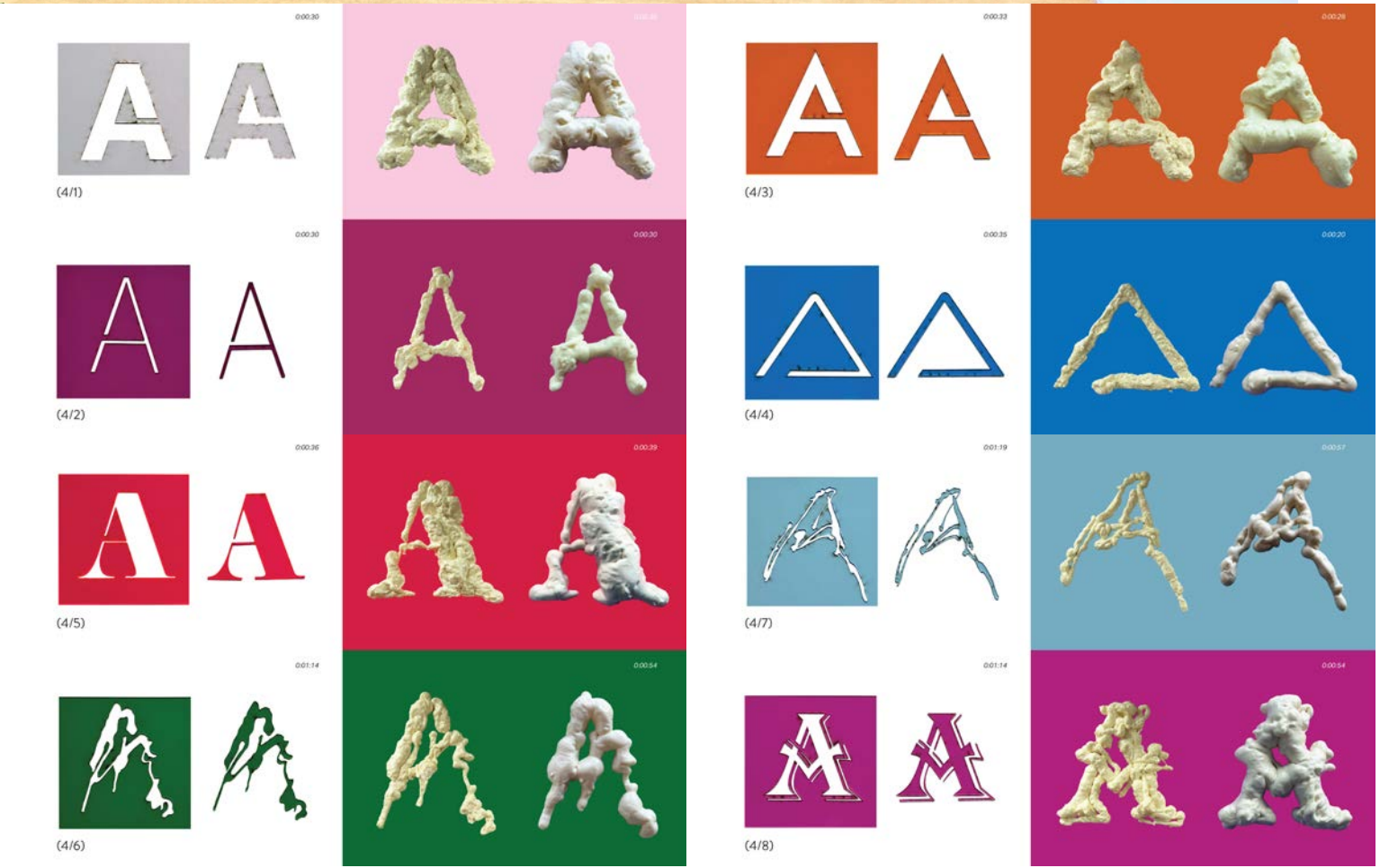
6. UniMate

Helping prospective international students access reliable and relevant information about studying abroad through our network of mentors.

Navigating Your Path to the International Education
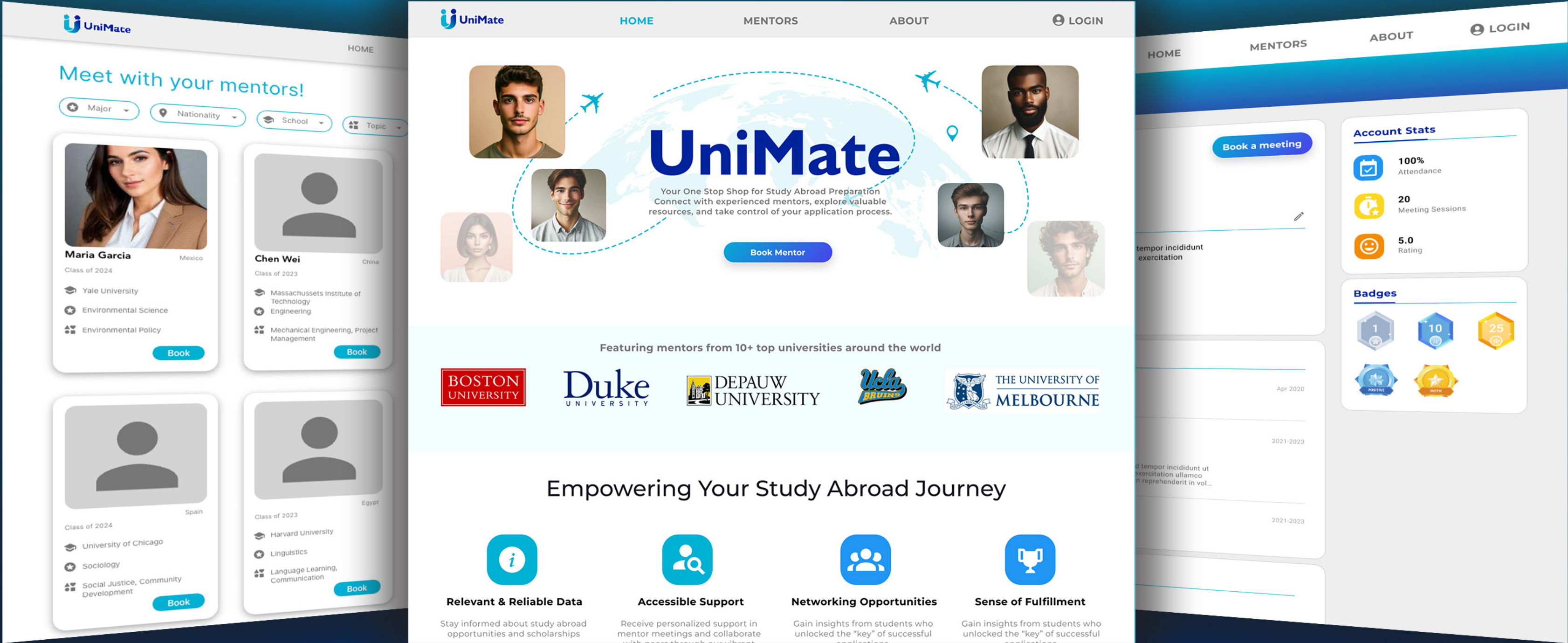
Website: https://unimate.com.vn/

Validation Hypothesis

Pain Hypothesis

Students believe that current alternatives for the college search process are either costly or takes extensive time for them to find relevant and reliable information.

Validation Activity

We posted an announcement with a survey attached in Facebook forums related to study abroad (where students actively discussed and asked questions about their journeys), describing what the users will get out of our mentorship program, and asking them a few demographics and qualitative questions about their college application process.

Validation Threshold

Pain hypothesis threshold: At least 7/10 interview mention the pain unprompted.
Job hypothesis threshold: 50% of our survey mentions this job.

Validation Results

We received 84 responses in 2 weeks for our survey, and we interviewed 10 people in one week. Here are the results:

Pain hypothesis: 9/10 mentions
Job Hypothesis: 66% (56/85 response)

Validation Exercise

31.8K-member Facebook Community   Notion Page for booking

Piecemeal MVP to validate the demand pre-product with great numbers, we conducted a test run of mentor-mentee booking sessions within our built-up Facebook community.

Jobs Board
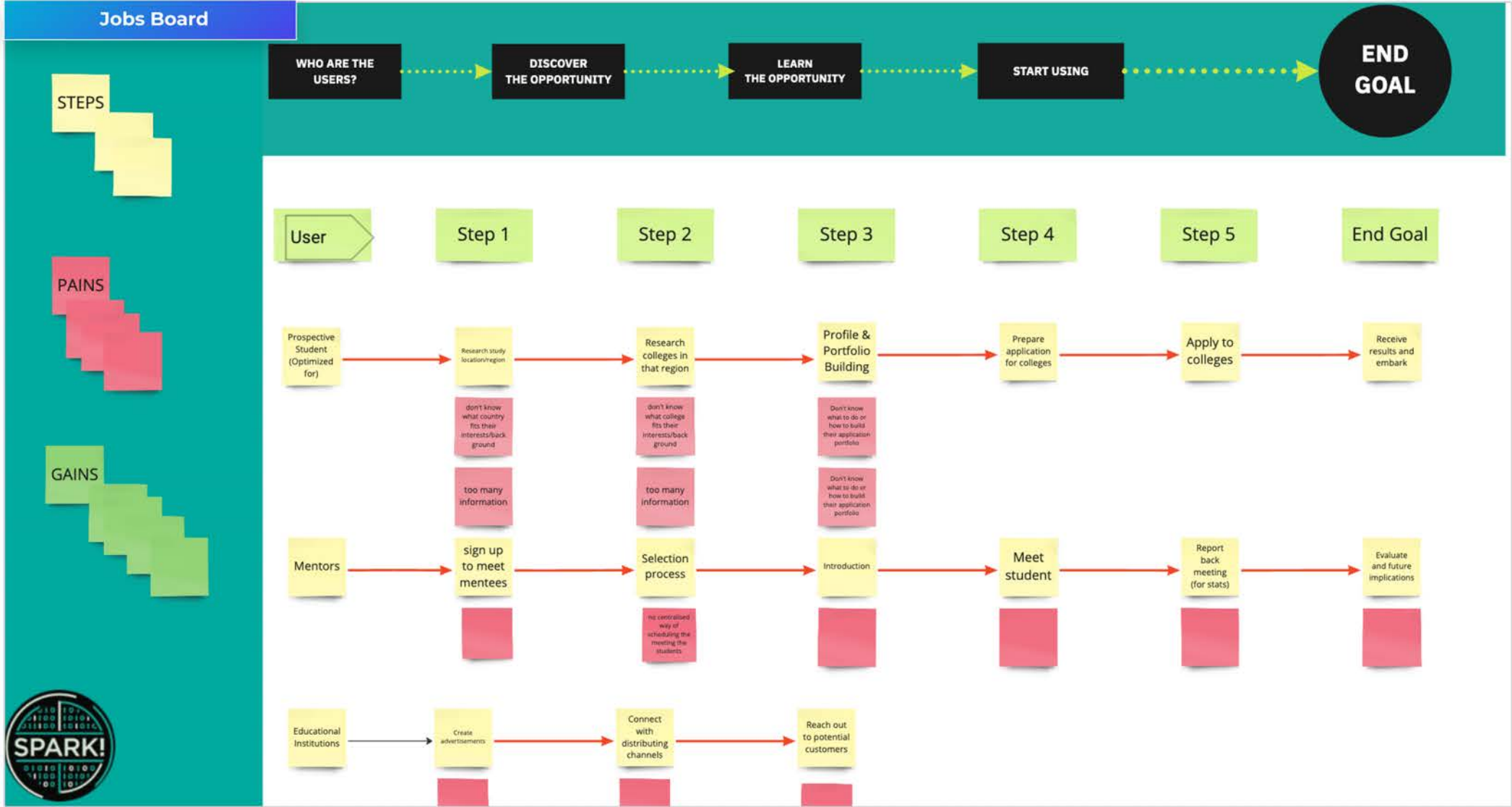
User Persona
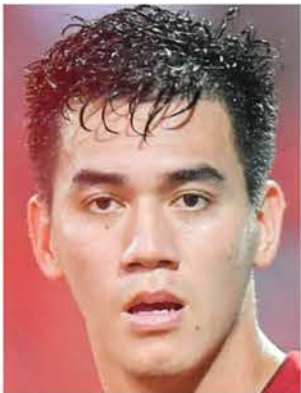
LINH THE LOST STUDENT

11th grader in Vietnam from modest background hoping to study abroad.

Linh is a high school student in Vietnam standing in front a major decision whether to study abroad or not. Linh spends countless hours hopelessly looking for information relevant to their background online, gradually feeling lost and less motivated during the process.

Jobs
Make a college list based on background/interest
Find Scholarship Resources
Have a clear overview of the process

Pain Points
Slow, Tedious Research Process
Unreliable, Irrelevant Information
Inaccessible resources and support
Lack of Emotional Support

User Story

DISPLAY LIST OF MENTORS

As a mentee
I want to be able to see a list of mentors so that know what mentors are available.

Additional detail:

Acceptance criteria
We'll agree it's complete when:
- list mentors with their pictures in block format

MENTOR ATTRIBUTES

As a mentee
I want to see the attributes of mentors so that I can find one that matches my interest

Additional detail:
...

Acceptance criteria
We'll agree it's complete when:
• small tabs/icons that show certain attributes of mentors (school name, major, etc.) on each mentor's profile

FILTER MENTORS

As a mentee
I want to filter mentors from the full list so that I can narrow down the list of my potential mentors

Additional detail:
...

Acceptance criteria
We'll agree it's complete when:
• there are filter functions on sidebar or searchbar

BOOK MENTORS

As an mentee
I want to be able to book the mentors that I am interested in so that I can have a meeting/chat with them

Additional detail:
...

Acceptance criteria
We'll agree it's complete when:
1. There is a CTA button (Ex: "Book me") that users can click on
2. Once the CTA is clicked, a scheduling tool (Calendly, YCBM) pop-up should appear with the available dates for the mentors

SET UP PROFILE (Mentor)

As a mentor
I want to ... show my background experience and introduce the basic info about myself to mentors. so that ... mentees with similar background and interested in my background can reach out to me.

Additional detail:
...

Acceptance criteria
We'll agree it's complete when:
... I'm able to input my past experience and complete a personal profile page. (basic info, school, job experience, etc.)

VIEW MENTEE PROFILE

As a mentor
I want to view my mentee's profile so that I can know what step they are on in their research process and see what I can help them with

Additional detail:
8 hours

Acceptance criteria
We'll agree it's complete when: We are able to access a mentee's profile page and see their basic info and progress?
...

VIEW MENTOR PROFILE

As a mentee
I want to view mentors's profile so that I can learn more about the mentor's background before deciding if I want to book a session with them

Additional detail:
8 hours

Acceptance criteria
We'll agree it's complete when: We are able to access a mentor's profile page and see more information about them like extracurricular, scholarships, etc.
...

RECEIVE BOOKING NOTIFICATION

As a mentor / mentee
I want to receive notification for meeting so that I can see who I am meeting

Additional detail:
-Completion: 2 hours

Acceptance criteria
We'll agree it's complete when:
- The mentors/mentees are able to see booking notification in their email along with the booking time, time zone, and the names

SEND REMINDER FOR MEETING (Mentor)

As a mentor, I want to be reminded about the meeting and what I should do to prepare so that I can come to the meeting ready and on time

Additional detail:
-Completion: 2 hours

Acceptance criteria
We'll agree it's complete when:
-The mentors/mentees are able to see reminders on email along with the booking time, time zone, and the names as well as a link to mentee's profile to check on

SEND REMINDER FOR MEETING (MENTEE)

As a mentor, I want to be reminded about the meeting and what I should do to prepare so that I can come to the meeting ready and on time

Additional detail:
-Completion: 6 hours

Acceptance criteria
We'll agree it's complete when:
1. Mentee receive an email reminder 1 day and 1 hour before the meeting happens
2. The email should contain the meeting time, who they are meeting with, and the questions they can prepare to ask the mentors

SET UP PROFILE (Mentee)

As a mentee
I want my mentors to be able to look through my background and interest so that I have mentors that have similar interest

Additional detail:
-Completion: 6 hours

Acceptance criteria
We'll agree it's complete when:
- Mentees are able to input their list of schools and desired majors.

VIEW FEEDBACK

As a mentee,
I want to see the experience of the people who met the mentor so that I know if the mentor is credible and worth meeting

Additional detail:
-completion: 8 hours

Acceptance criteria
We'll agree it's complete when:
• when a list of feedback can be displayed
• the mentors, students, or anyone entering the web app can view a mentor's feedback when clicking on their profile

REMIND TO LEAVE RATING

As a mentee,
I want to be reminded to leave a rating for mentors I met
so that I can improve the overall website experience for other students

Additional detail:
-completion: 2 hours

Acceptance criteria
We'll agree it's complete when:
• reminder system after each meeting pops up

ACHIEVEMENT BADGES FOR MENTORS

As a mentor
I want to receive badges of certification so that I can prove my credibility and feel motivated about my contributions

Additional detail:
3 hours

Acceptance criteria
We'll agree it's complete when: Mentors able to have certain badges displayed on their profile once they acquire certain achievements
...

Navigating your Path to the *International Education*

UniMate

UniMate

A web platform that connects prospective international students with a supportive community of mentors to access reliable and relevant information about studying abroad.
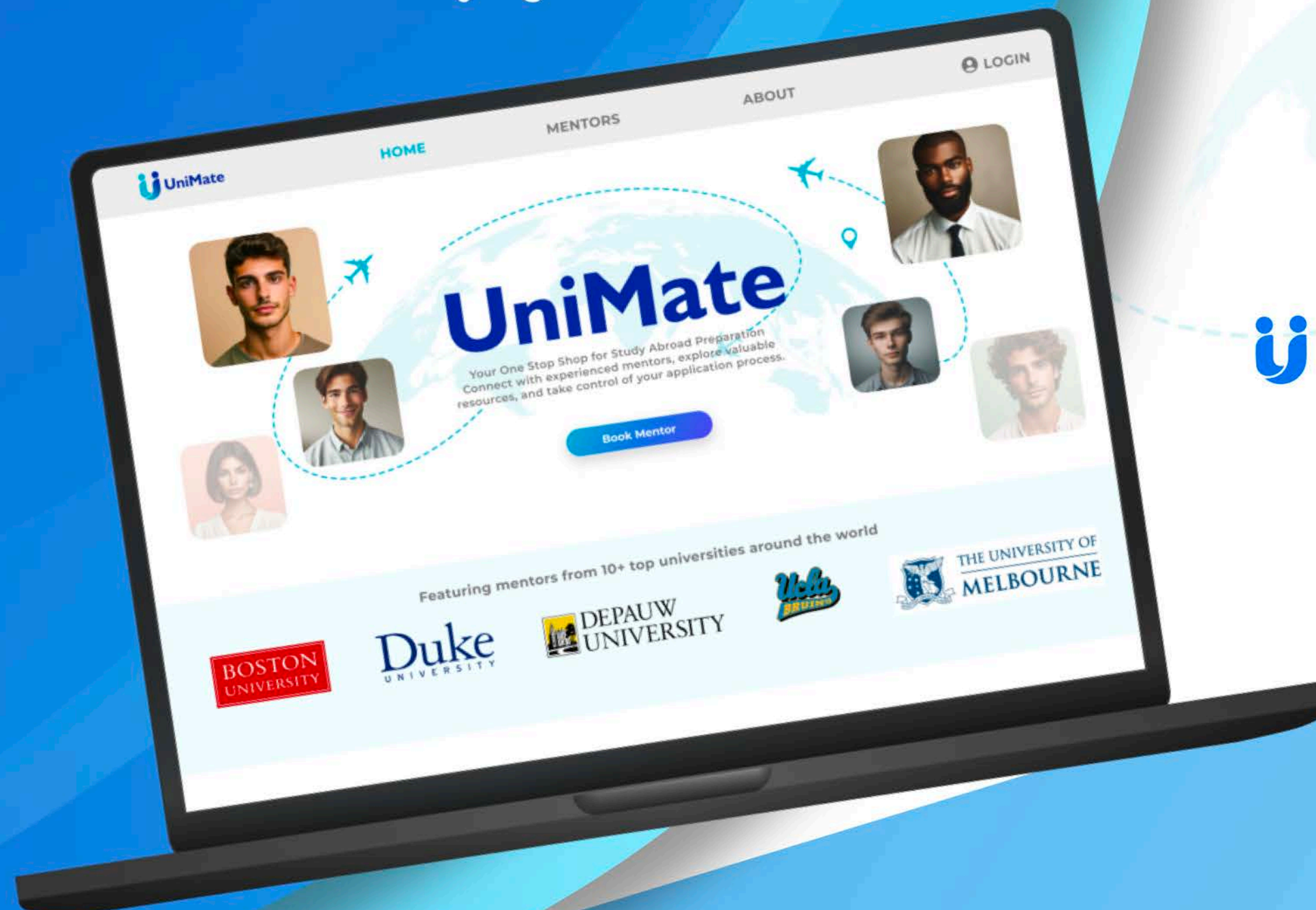
TARGET

Mentee: high school students who are interested in studying abroad, especially those from non-wealthy backgrounds.
Mentor: current students at universities and colleges around the world.

PROBLEM

Prospective international students often find the college search process tedious and challenging as they struggle to locate relevant and reliable information in the vast ocean of the Internet, and many are unable to afford expensive private consulting services to support them.

Additionally, from the 85 responses we received from our validation exercise
· 70% of people whom we interviewed are unclear about what it takes to study abroad
· ~83% of those come from modest backgrounds

SOLUTION

A mentor booking platform featuring college students studying at global universities volunteering to help out prospective international students and answer any questions they may have.

DEC 2023
Pilot Testing
Ran 2-week pilot testing session with the piecemeal MVP. Received 80+ mentee signups and 15 mentor signups, and achieved 80 sessions with an average satisfaction rating of 90%.

APR 2024
Pre-seed Funding
Won 3rd place in the Social Impact Track of the Poyiadjis Hospitality Innovation Competition and $5000 in non-diluted funding.

MAY 2024
MVP
Finished MVP development and Demo Day.

Future
Beta Testing
Plan to conduct beta testing from June to August, and launch in September.

Hoang Nguyen
Computer Science '26

Nhan Ton
Computer Science '25

Minh Dinh
Computer Science '26

Nguyen Le
Computer Science '26

Chichi Zhao
Graphic Design '25
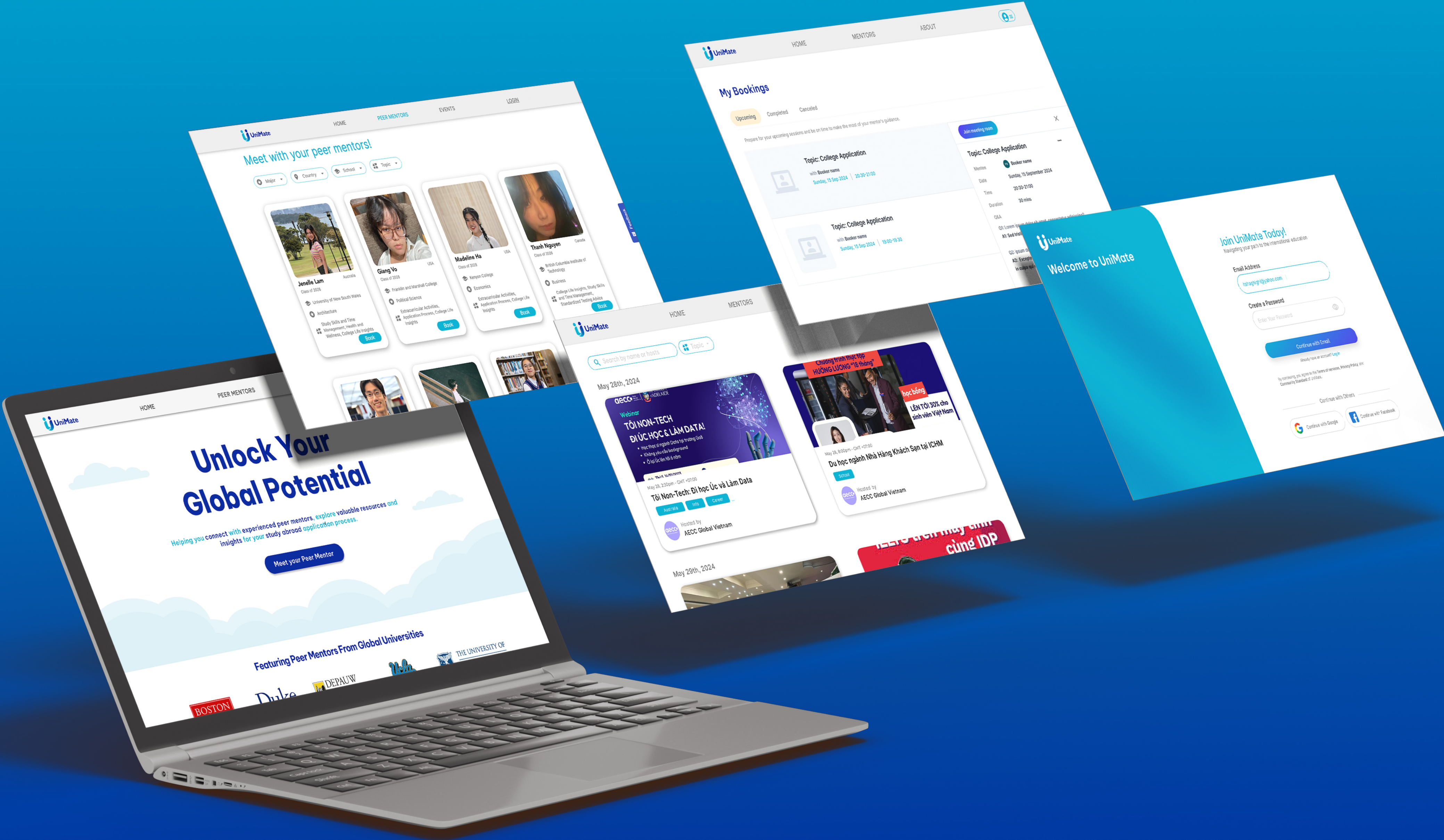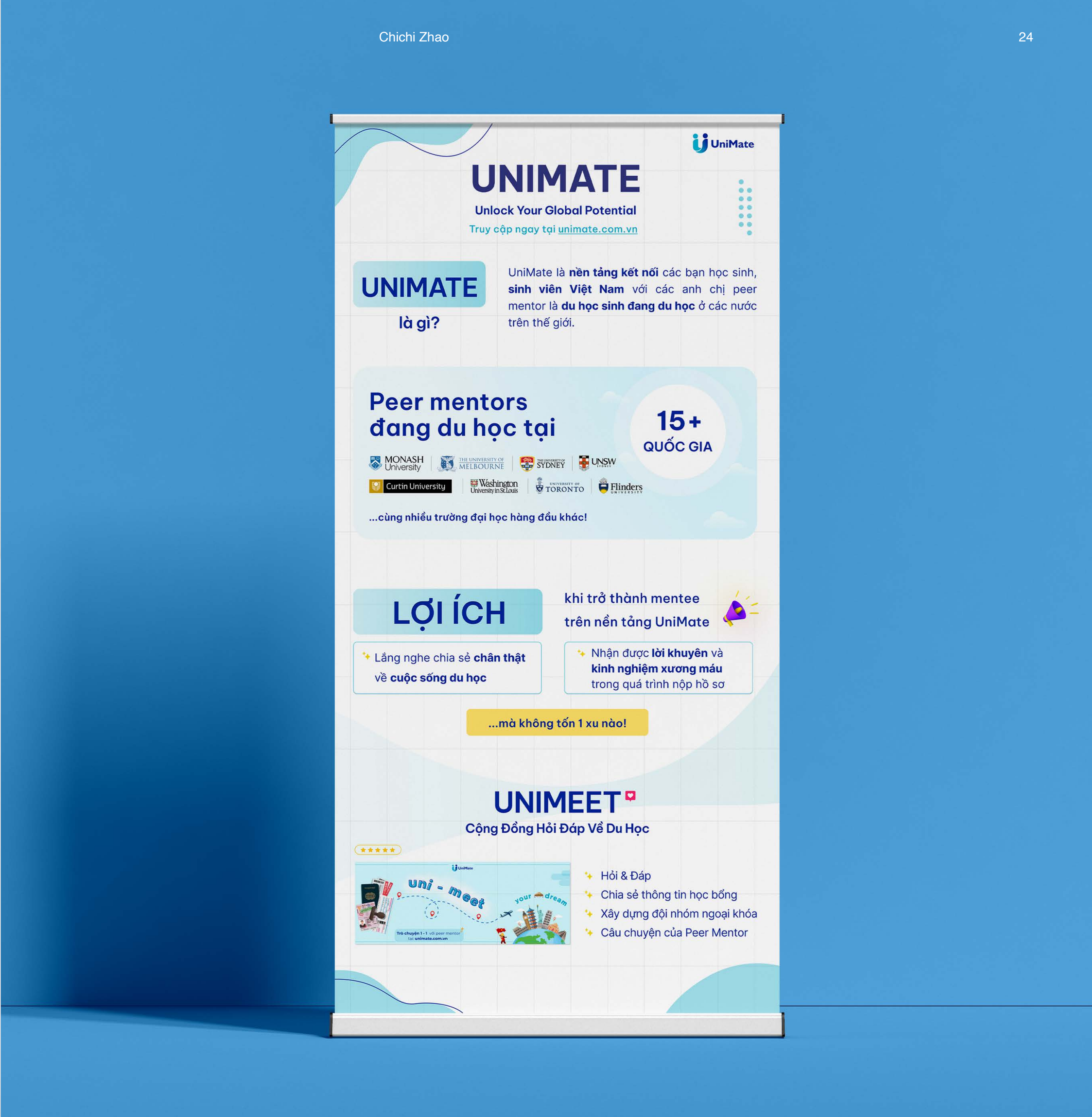
7. Wayfinding System Design Manual

This project presents a comprehensive wayfinding system for the Boston Contemporary Museum, designed to enhance visitor navigation and engagement. The manual includes detailed layouts of the entire wayfinding system, featuring museum floor maps, directory elevations, directional signage, and location signage elevations.

Through thoughtful design and clear visual communication, the wayfinding system ensures an intuitive and seamless visitor experience, balancing functionality with the museum's contemporary aesthetic. Each element has been carefully crafted to reflect the museum's identity while prioritizing accessibility and ease of use for a diverse audience.

CONTENT

A   Design Specifications

A–01 Color & Type System
A–02 Arrow & Pictogram

B   Map Design

B–01 Map Presentation
B–02 Map Elevation

C   Wayfinding Signages

C–01 Wayfinding & Signages Set
C–02 Directory Elevation
C–03 Directional Signage Elevations
C–04 Location Signage Elevations

Manual Content Page

BOSTON CONTEMPORARY MUSEUM

Wayfinding System Design Manual

Chichi Zhao
Boston University
2023

BOSTON CONTEMPORARY MUSEUM
Wayfinding System Design Manual

8. Design History Anthology

This curated anthology explores cultural design practices through the lens of Psychedelic Art, presenting articles, reflections, and creative interpretations. Emerging in the 1960s and 1970s, Psychedelic Art drew inspiration from earlier movements like Art Nouveau, which flourished in response to the mechanized production of the Industrial Revolution.

By examining the cultural significance and historical context of these movements, the anthology highlights the enduring power of design to reflect and shape societal values. Through Psychedelic Art, it offers a lens to critically engage with design as a practice that bridges past and present, responding to and influencing the contemporary world.
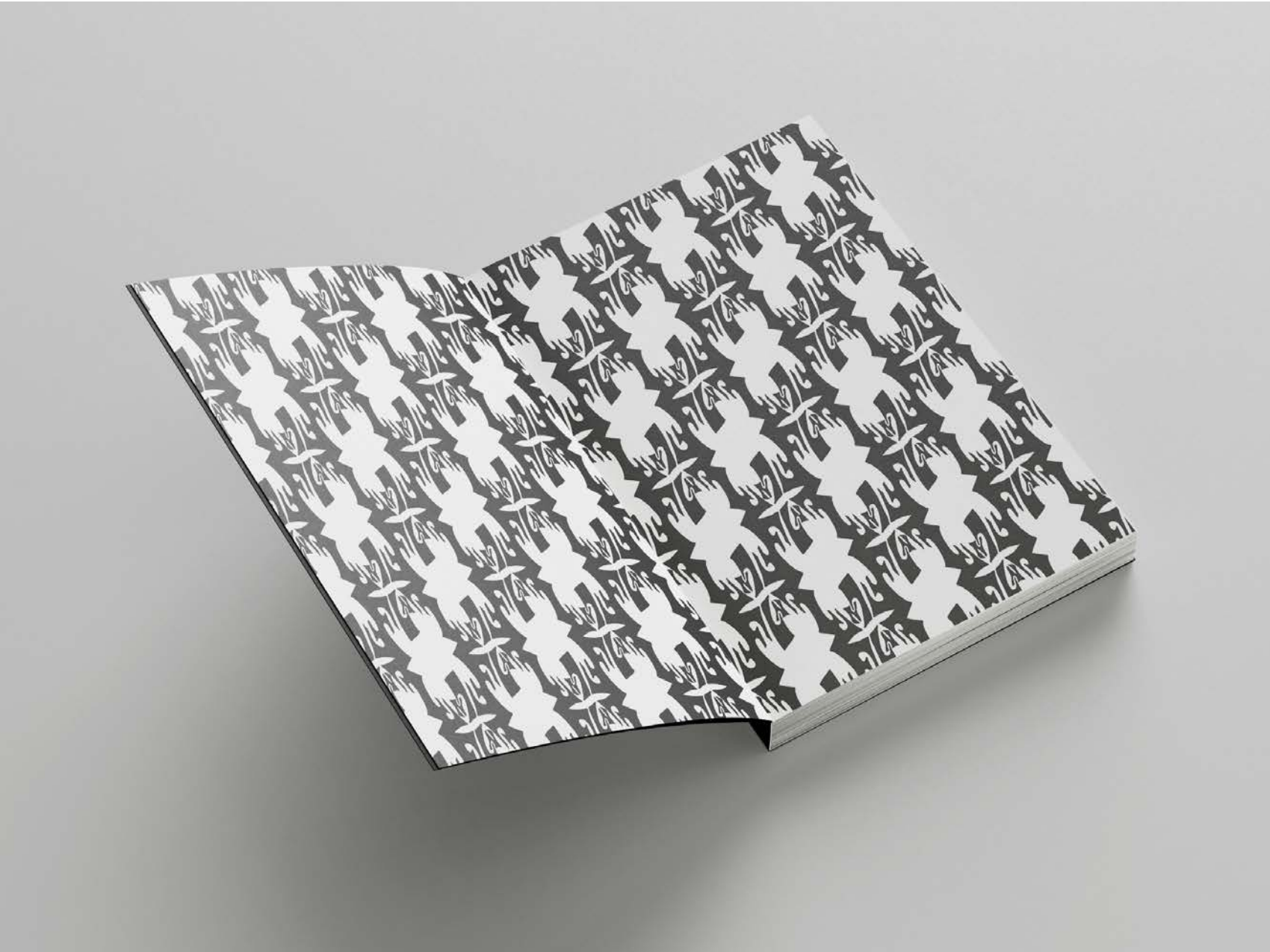
Art Nouveau & Psychedelic Art
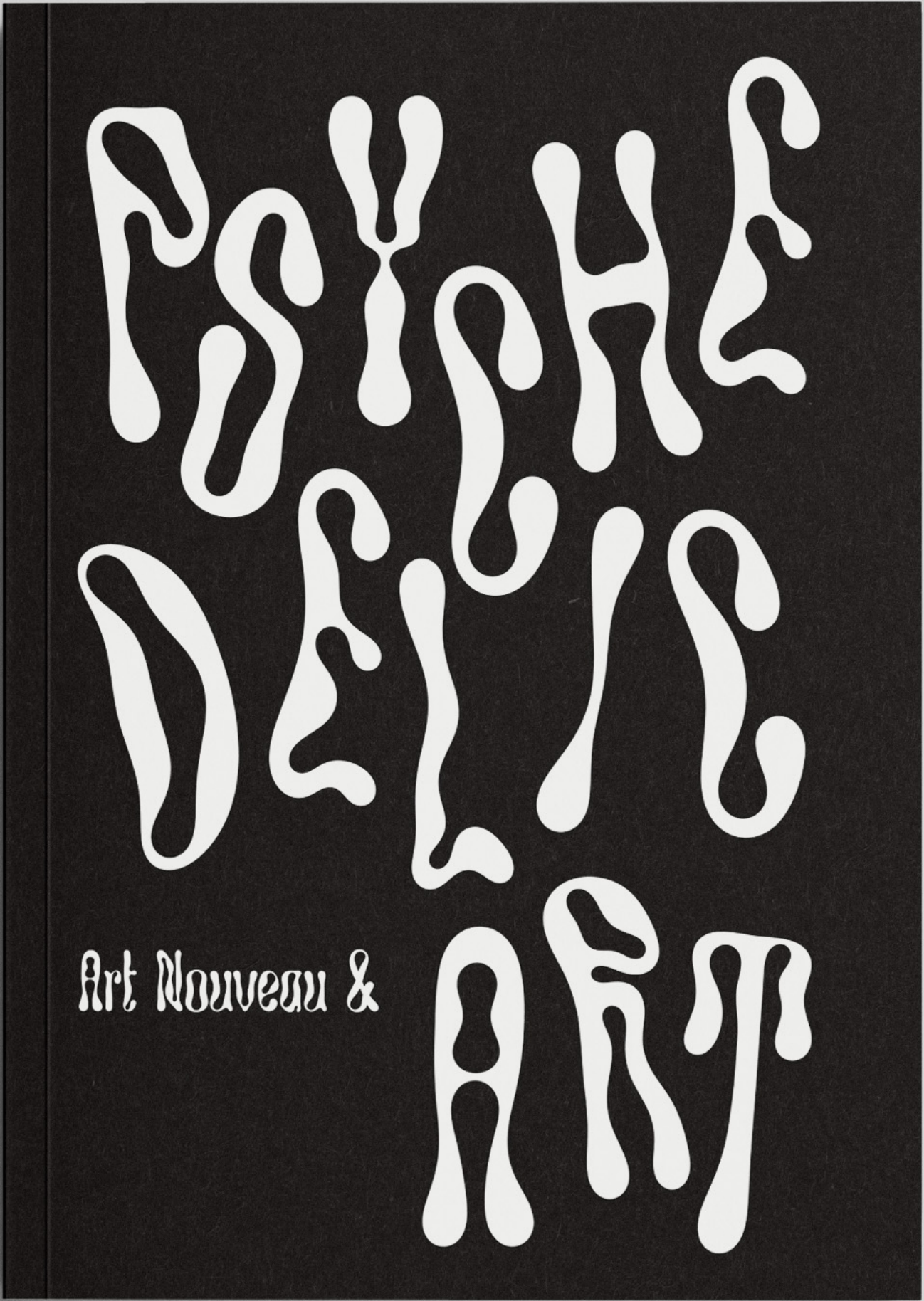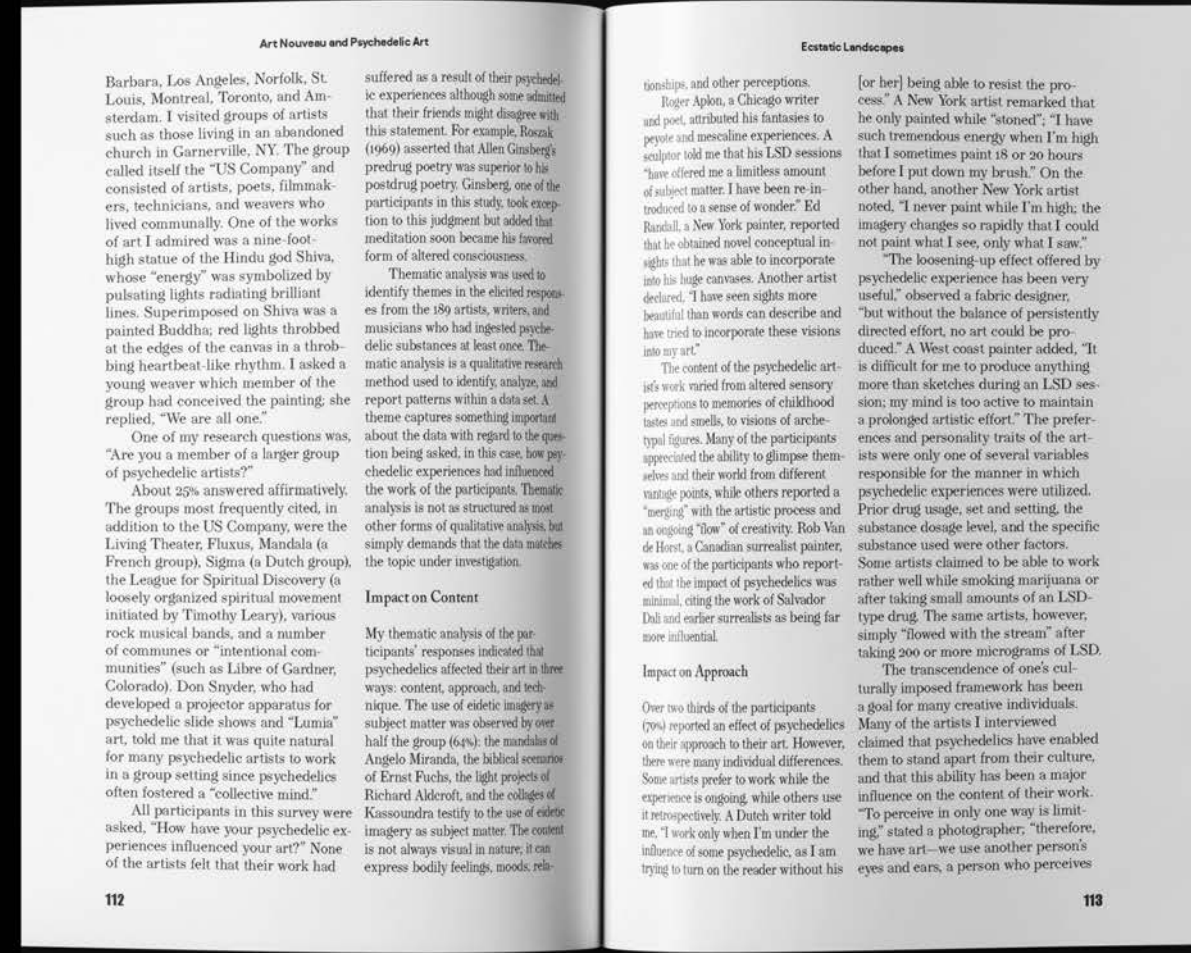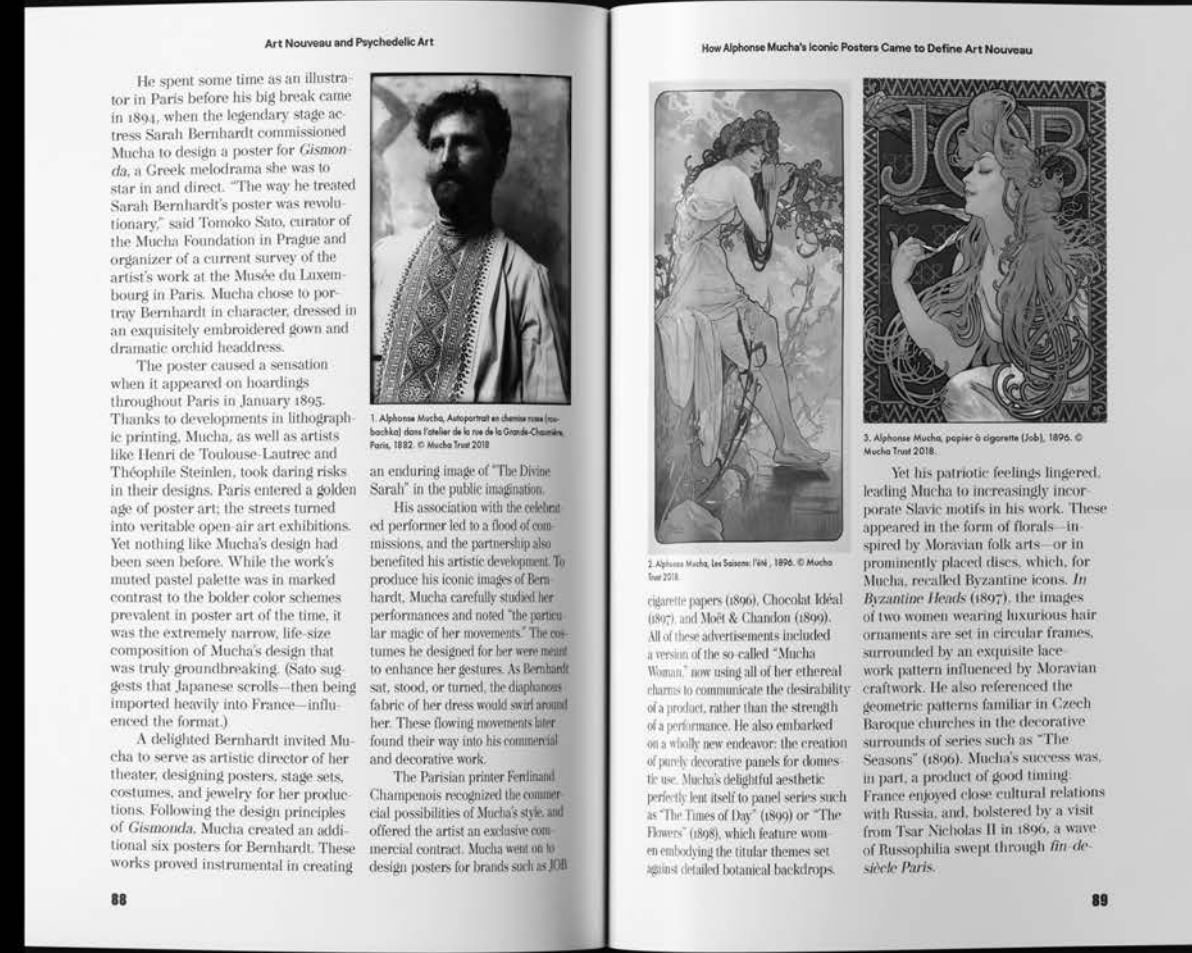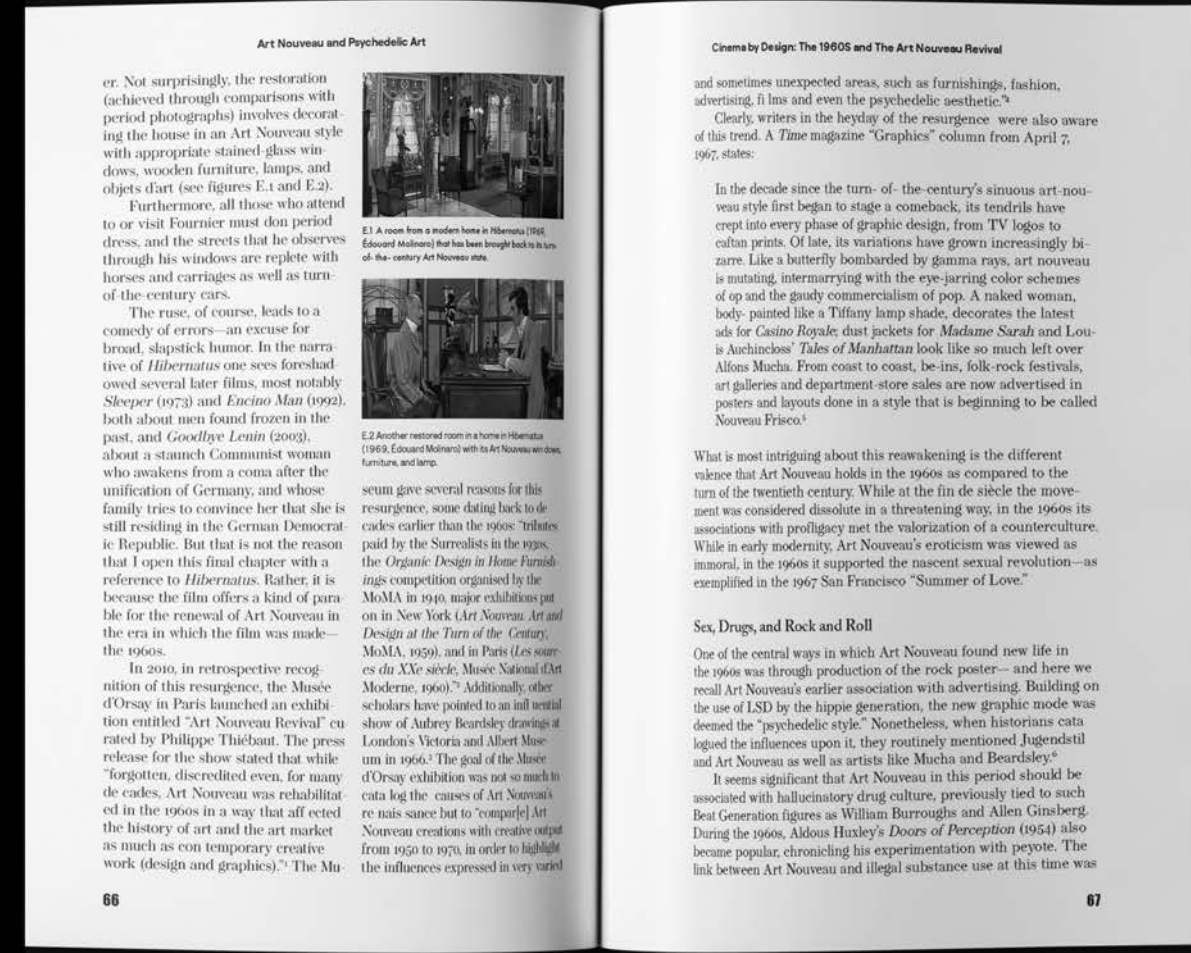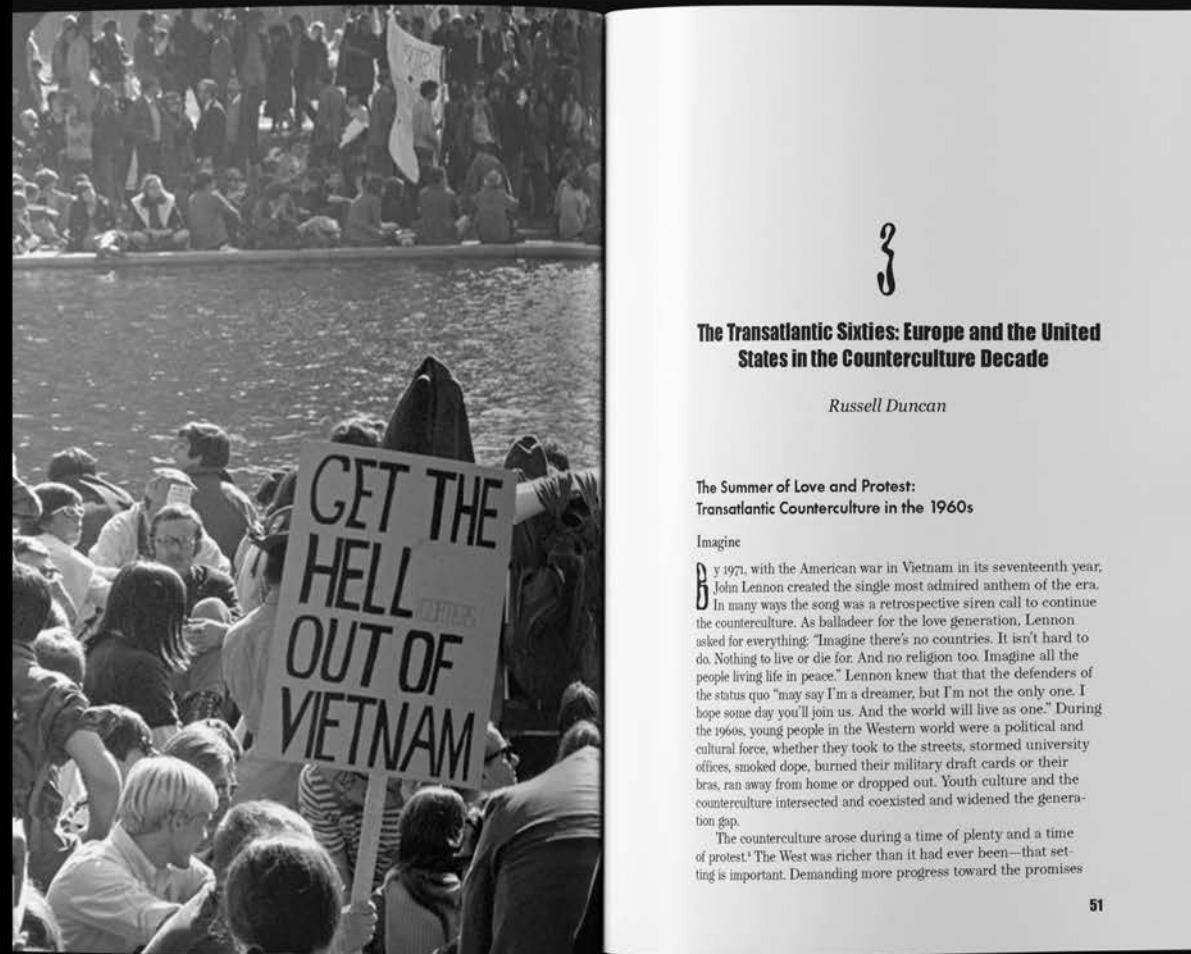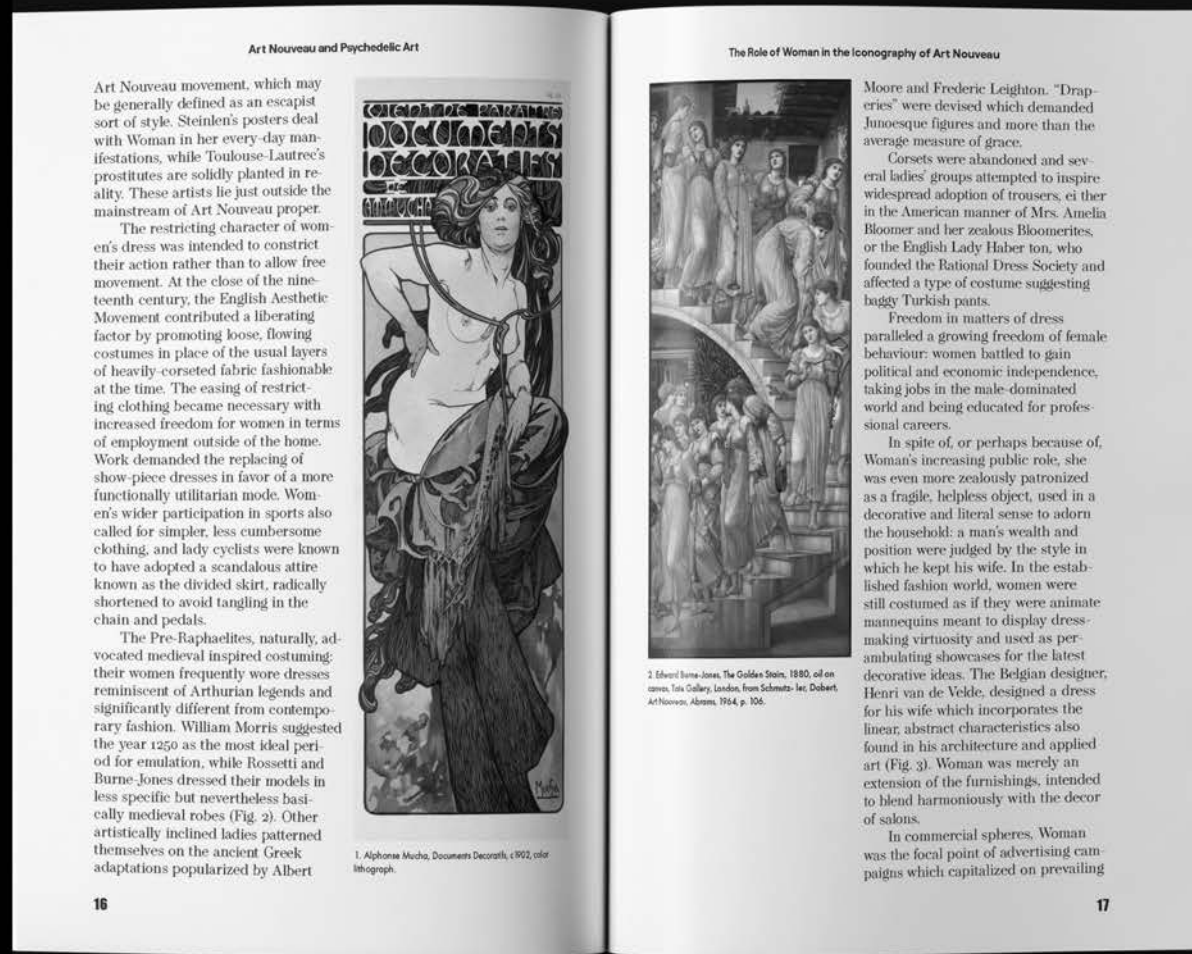
9. Reimagining Psychedelia

Researching an iconic and historical poster, learning about its provenance and the designer who created it, then reimagined the poster in 50 ways.

Bonnie MacLean was one of the main creators of psychedelic posters in San Francisco in the 1960s and '70s. She often identified this poster as her favorite, "BG #75." It depicts a peacock's tail next to a human face, with swirling blue lettering listing the groups appearing at the Fillmore in a particular week in July 1967. She experimented with brightly contrasting colors and optical illusions to evoke the dazzling visual effects of hallucinogenic drugs such as LSD. The ornamentation and illegible typography as well as the sinuous and swirling lines, were a visual code to psychedelics, but also drew from earlier Art Nouveau design movements of the turn of the century.
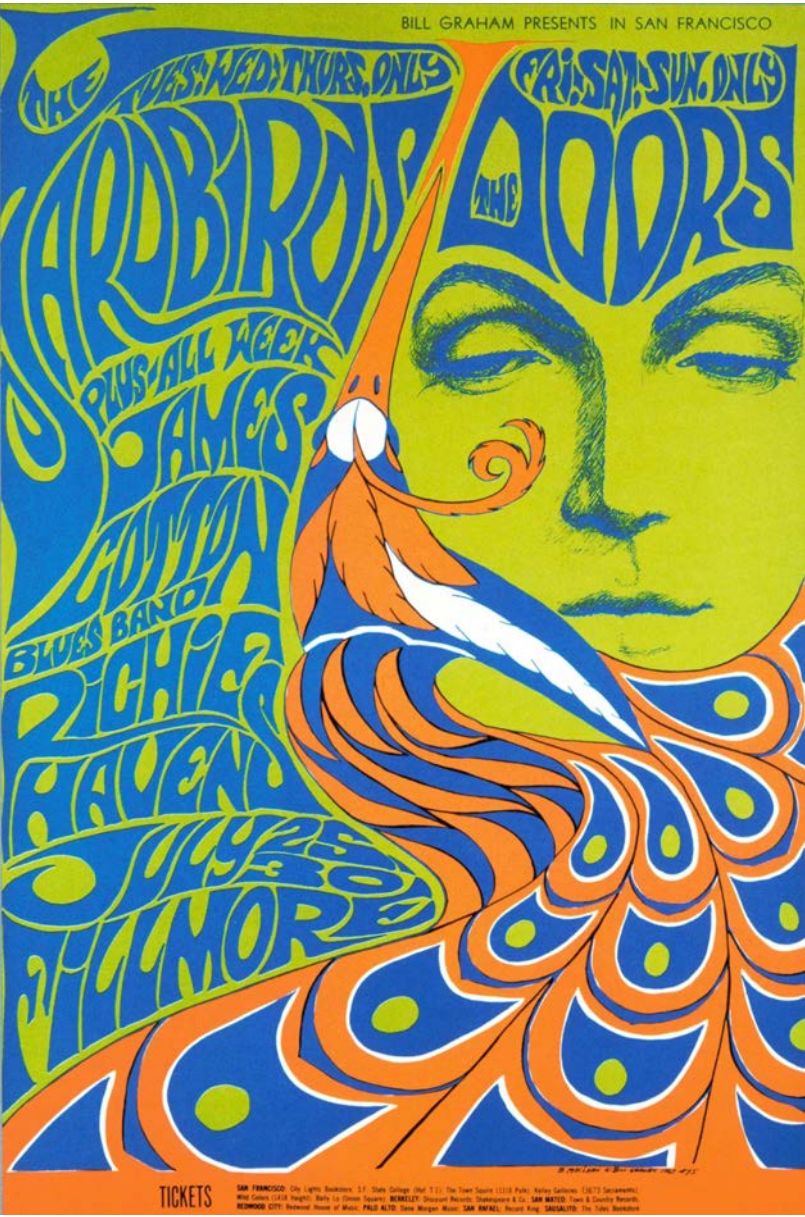
Original Poster by Bonnie MacLean

50 Poster Iterations

Website

https://zhaox349.github.io/50iterations/
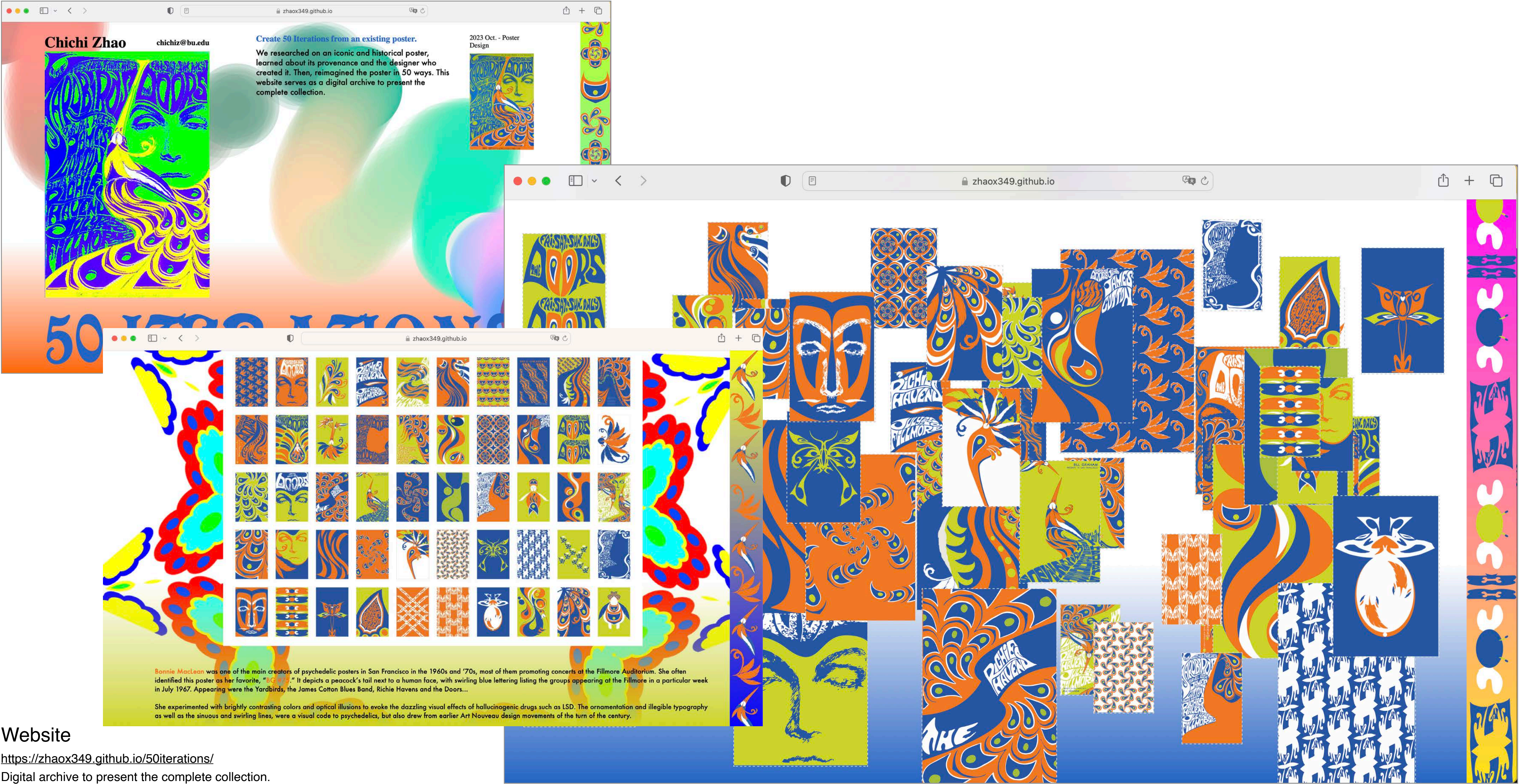
Digital archive to present the complete collection.

10. Masonry

Masonry is a typographic exploration shaped by systems, grids, and rules. Starting from a grid inspired by traditional Chinese architecture, the project builds custom letterforms within a rigid structure. Influenced by glitch aesthetics, PCB circuits, and gaming visuals, the poster uses vibrant contrast and hidden messages to invite interaction and decoding. Letters like Boston University, corridor, and labyrinth are embedded in the design—revealed only through close attention and curiosity.
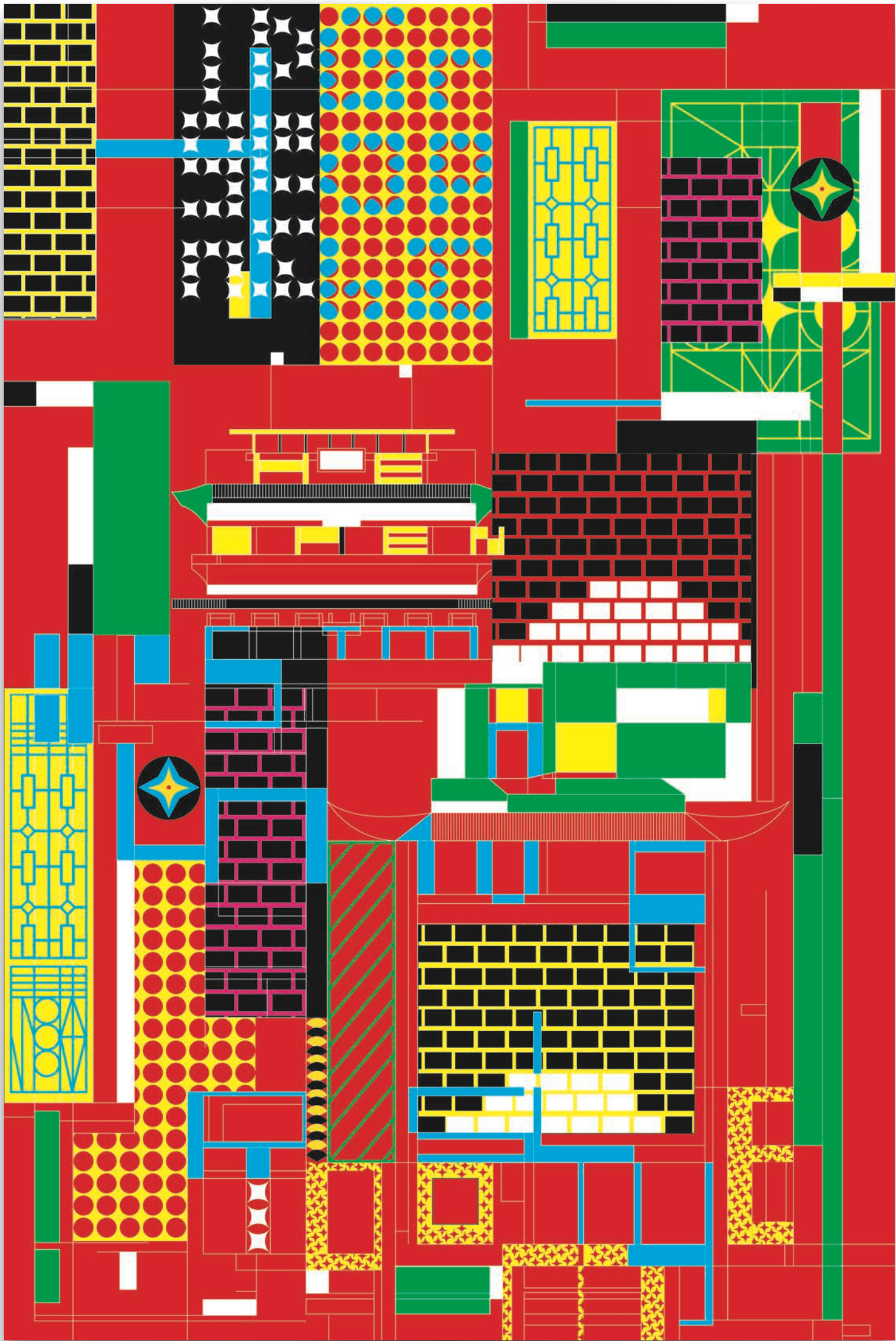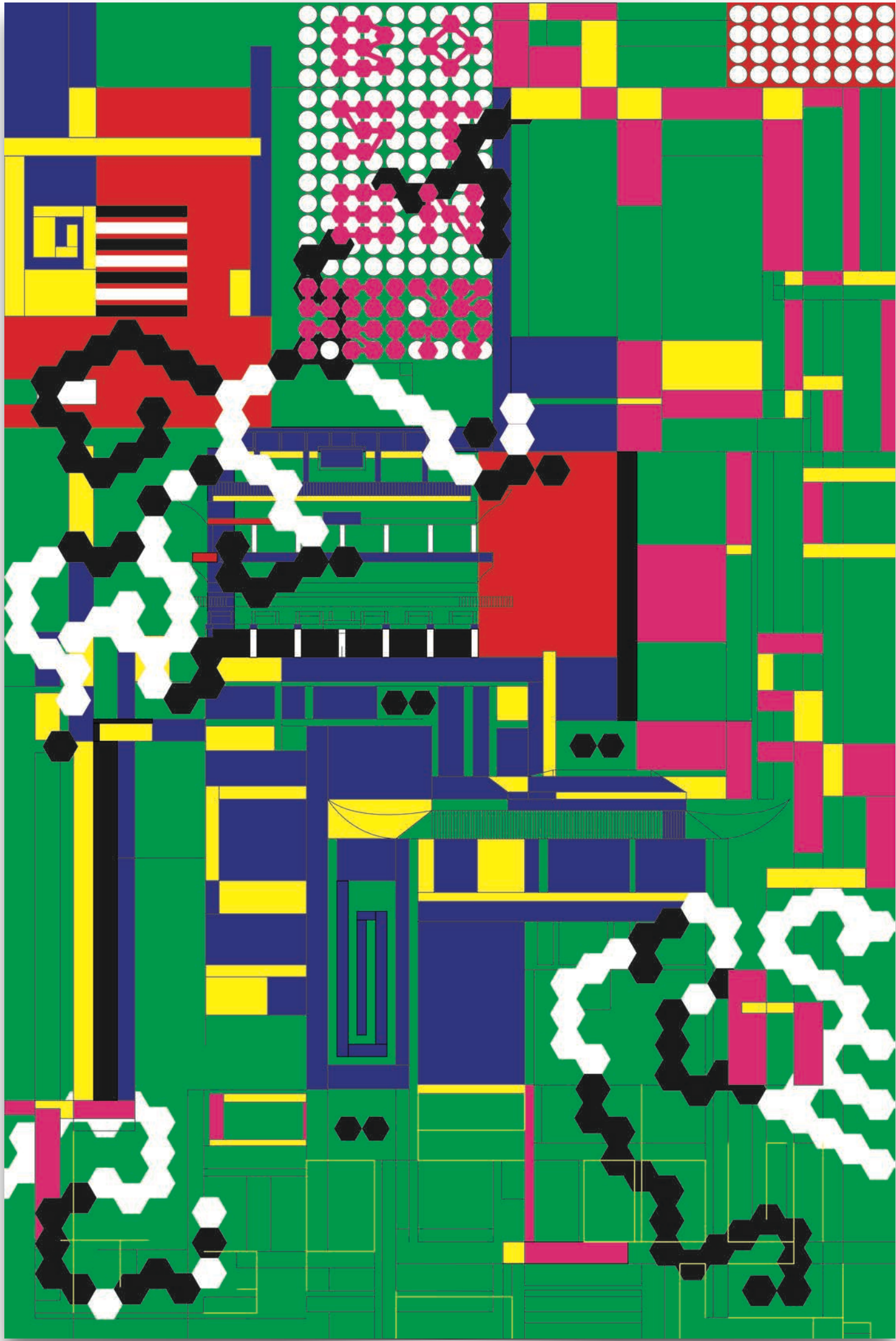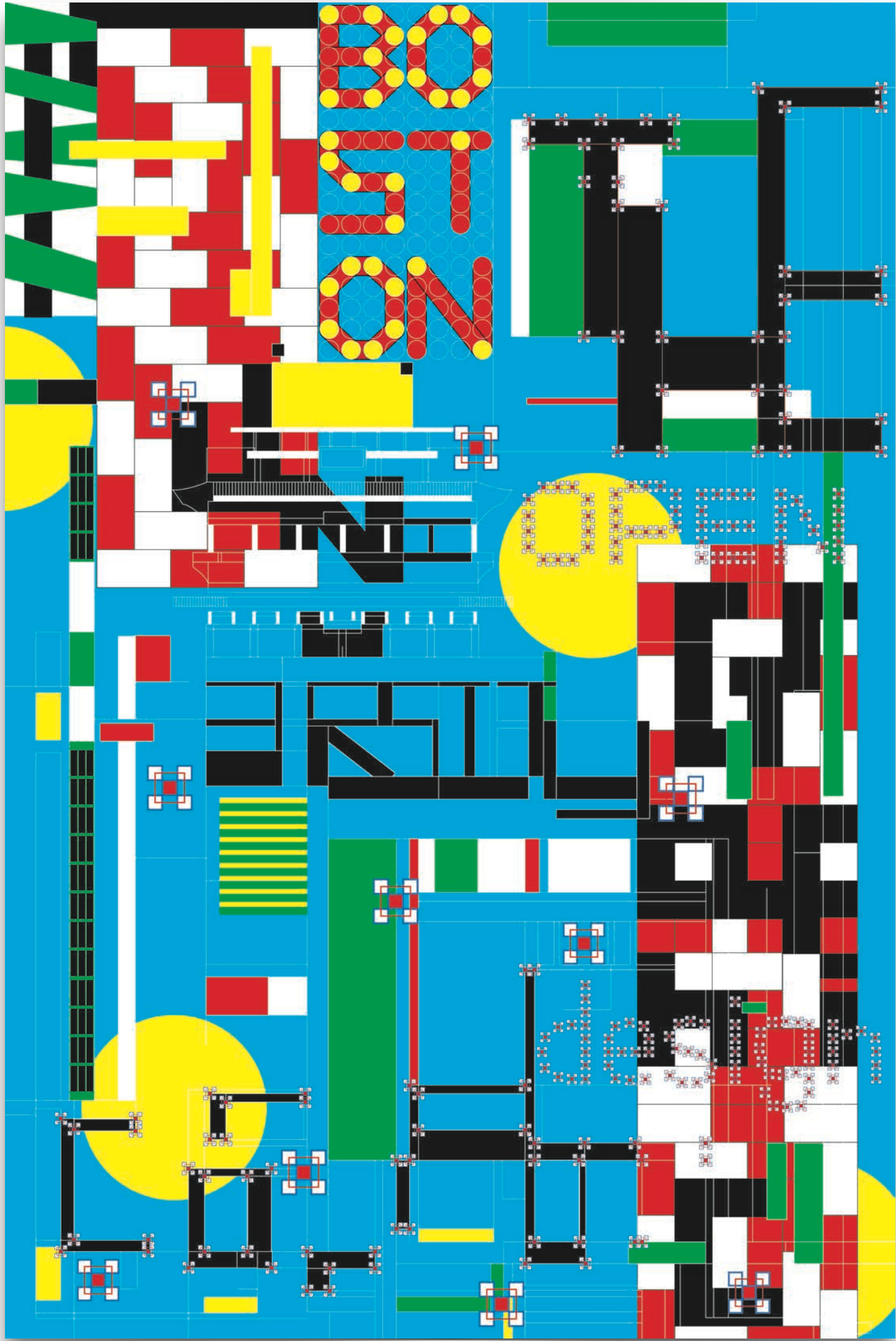
11. American Chinese (Restaurant)

Chinese food has always been stamped as "cheap stuff" by most Americans since takeout boxes, posters, and even menus were designed downscale. As a response, my project offers a striking contrast: the book functions as sarcasm to challenge the prejudiced attitude towards the Chinese community and culture, while the layout and design of the collage zine refer to some of the stereotypical styles.

Fine American Chinese Cuisine

1. General Tso Chicken
2. Chungking Spicy Chicken
3. Orange Beef
4. Beef and Broccoli
5. Sweet and Sour Chicken
6. Beef Chow Fun
7. Chop Suey
8. Cashew Chicken
9. Egg Foo Young
10. Fried Wontons

LUNCH SPECIAL
TAKE OUT SERVICE
Mon – Fri: 11:30am to 1200pm

OPEN HOURS
Mon - Thurs: 11:00 am to 11:00 pm
Fri - Sat: 11:00 am to 12:30 mid
Sunday: 12:00 noon to 11:30 pm

FAST FREE DELIVERY
(Min. $10.00)

Lunch Specials and Beverages Not Included
Any Order Over $12.00 Get an Egg Roll
or a Can of Soda FREE

1. 左宗棠鸡
2. 重庆辣子鸡
3. 陈皮牛肉
4. 芥蓝牛肉
5. 酸甜鸡
6. 干炒牛河
7. 杂碎
8. 腰果鸡丁
9. 芙蓉蛋
10. 炸云吞

生意兴隆

IMPERIAL
餐厅中文名 Restaurant English Name

$6.75
特價午餐 Lunch Special
Steamed Rice and House Soup (Included)
From: 11:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday - Friday
Major Credit Card Accepted - Minimum Charge $20

Typically American Chinese Restaurant's menu will be much smaller. It's a single page handwritten menu photocopied onto some pink or green or yellow paper. Sometimes they offer lunch and dinner menu with special offer and discount.

The dishes will be categorized according to the ingredient, especially different kinds of meat and vegetable.

海鲜 Seafood
猪肉 Pork
牛肉 Beef
禽类 Poultry
蔬菜豆腐 Vegetables/Bean Curd
$5.75 饭类 Rice Dishes
湯類 Soup (Won Ton Sea Noodle & Egg - Sour Price)
面類 Lo Mein

CARRY OUT MENU
Save Time call 15 Minutes Before Pick Up
Phone: (313) 928-4220, (313) 928-3590
OPEN HOURS
Serving The Area Since 1989
19335 Dix at Outer Drive, Melvindale, MI 481

INSTEAD OF
Lo Mein
ORDER
$12

We Pay Low Prices For Chinese Food

廉价

May, which is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, marks the anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad. It was largely built by Chinese immigrants from 1864 to 1869, working at a grueling pace for less money than white workers. And these labor practices have an impact today on how much we're willing to pay for Chinese food – rooted in a perception that Chinese labor is inherently "cheap," historians say.

Racial Biases
好便宜

Lew-Williams said. "Chinese were paid less, given the worst strenuous jobs. People against the Chinese saw this as revealing of their innate nature. That Chinese were fundamentally 'cheap' labor and designed to do this back-breaking labor."

"Cheap" Labor

"If you take price as a surrogate for prestige ... there are some cuisines we are willing to pay for and some we are willing to pay for, and that is related partly, I think, to how we evaluate those national cultures and their people," Ray said in Voice of America.

特惠价!
0.38 /LB
$24.95
$2.99
$29.8
特价 PROMO
特价 SPECIAL
万事如意礼盒
惊爆价
MADE IN CHINATOWN
CHINATOWN NYC

American Chinese (Restaurant) Collage Zine

American Chinese (Restaurant) Map

American Chinese (Restaurant) Infographic Poster

12. SI

SI is a Stretch Mark Shaper brand offering natural and toxin-free mark liner and stencil kits. Every mark is the witness of time and growth. We believe in presenting the authentic self and accomplishing the new concept of an attractive body for every consumer. Instead of covering and being ashamed about body marks, we aim to highlight body positivity through coloring marks. We use natural and sustainable materials to fulfill aesthetic needs. Our cosmetics brand allows people with stretch marks to accept and respect themselves. Our mission is to create a new standard of beauty.

Body with Stretch Marks

SI Stretch Mark Liner

SI Stretch Mark Stencil Kit

13. Resilience Typeface

The Resilience project is a typographic experiment using hand-cut Helvetica letterforms on Shrinky Dinks sheets to compose new letter forms while using a heat gun. The high temperature shrinks and bends the flexible sheet in order to create a new elastic form of type. It aims to address the resilience concept through form-making and adapting to deconstruction and a deviation in direction.
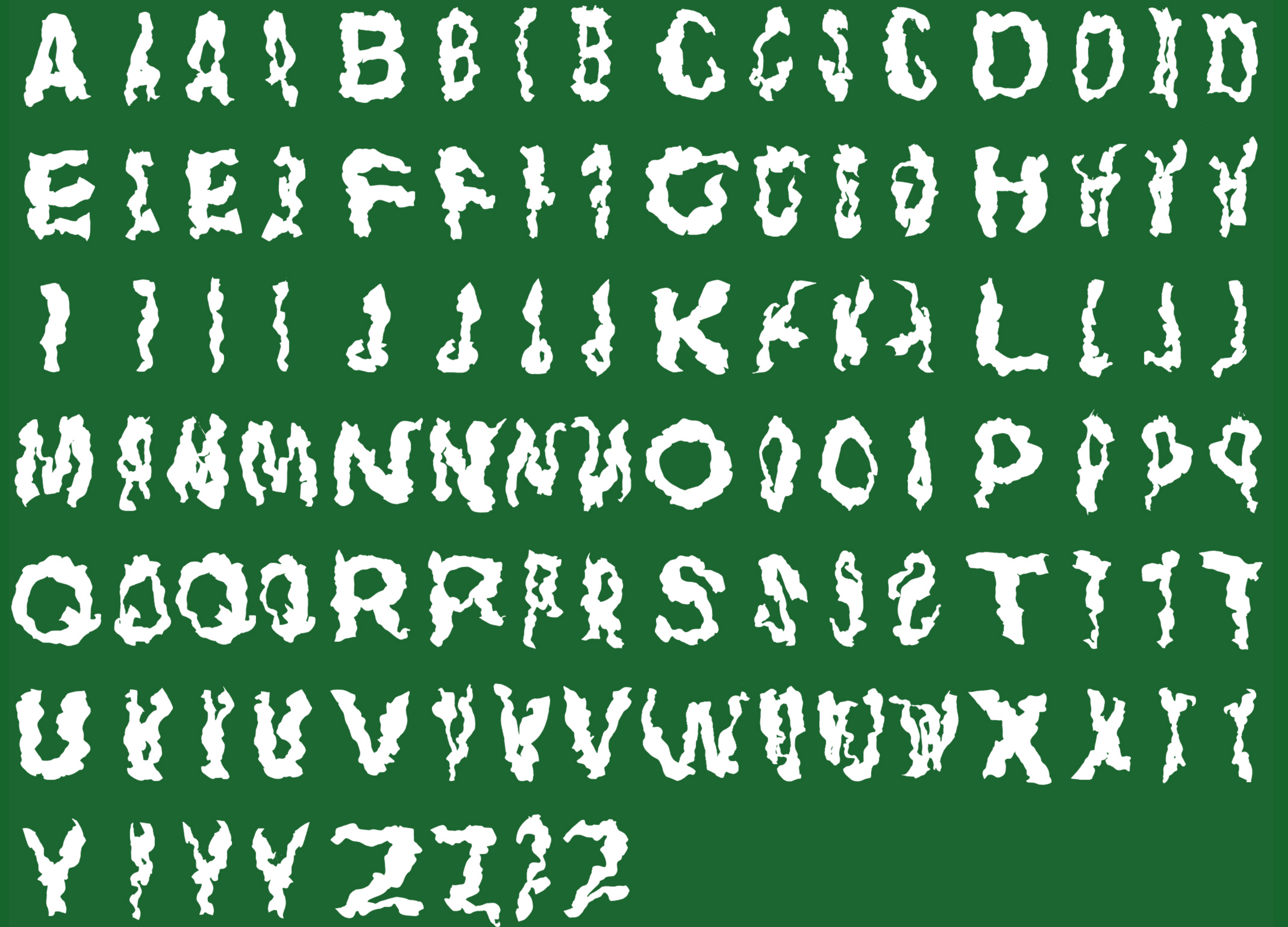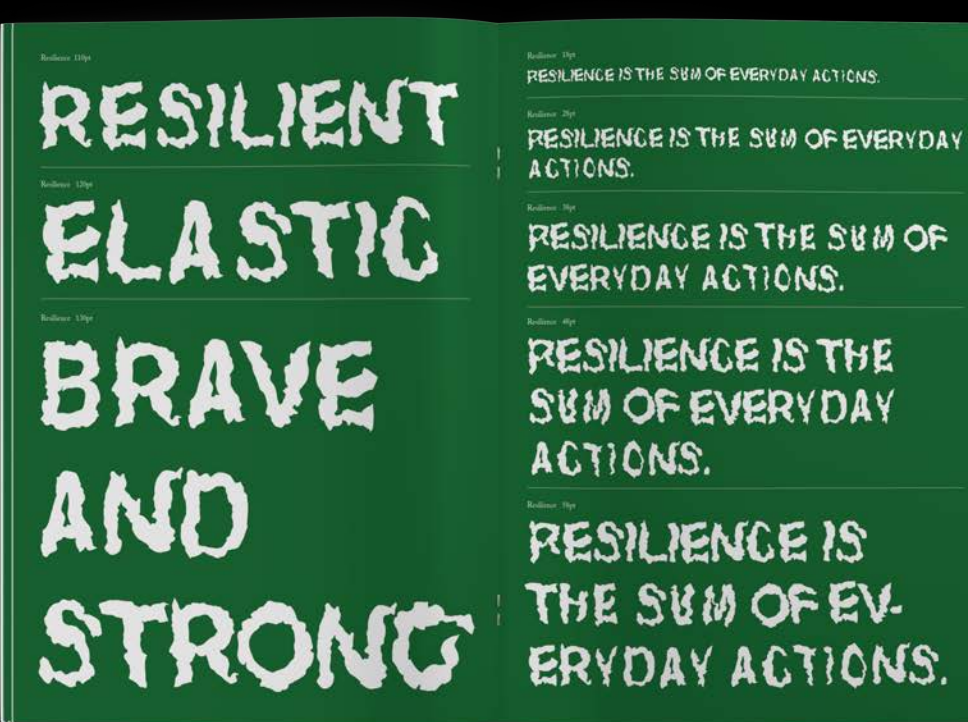
Process

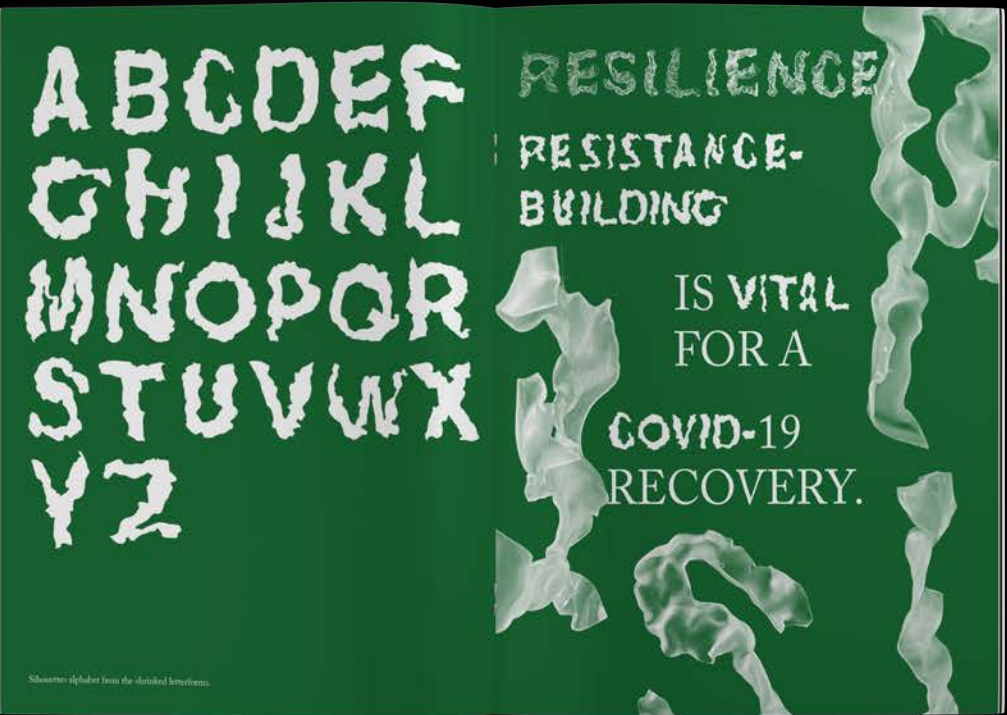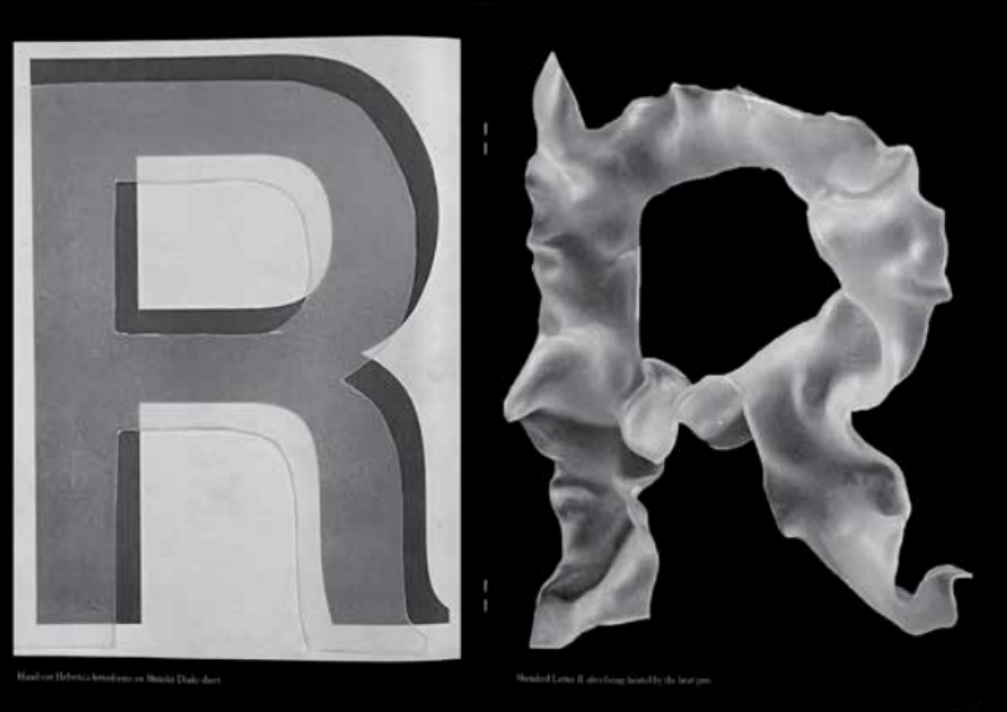Letterforms on Shrinky Dink Sheets are heated to form a new typeface.
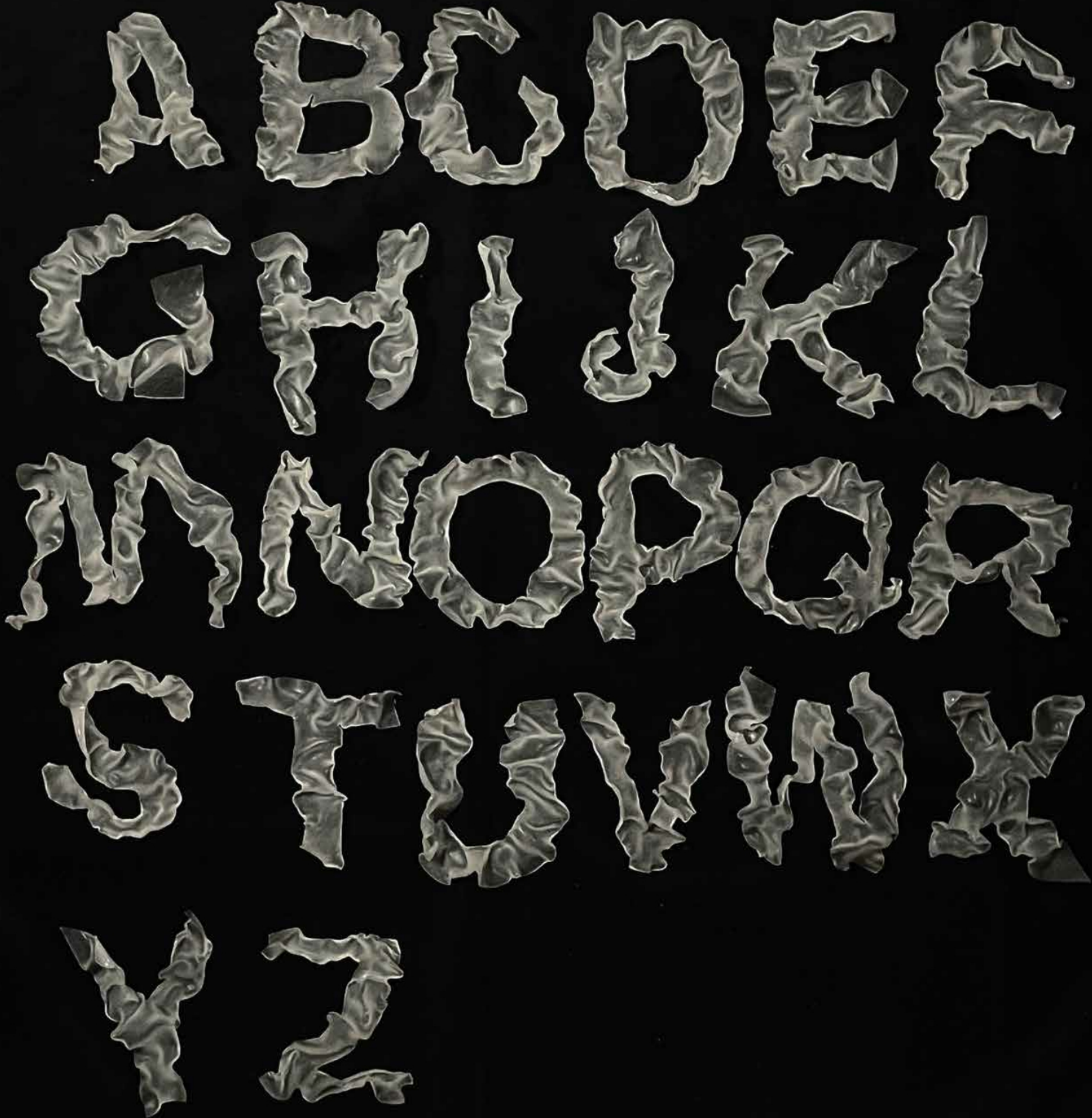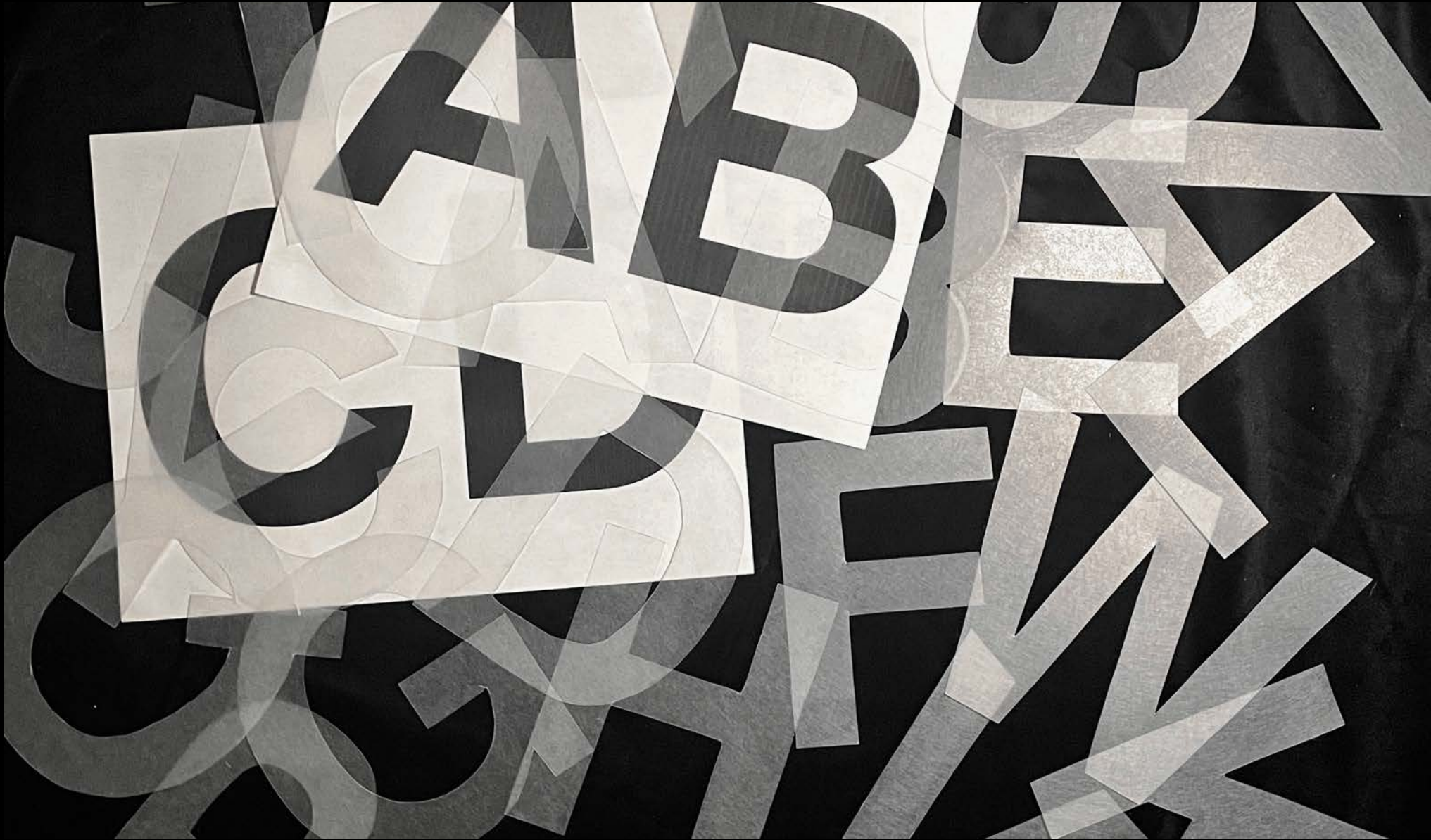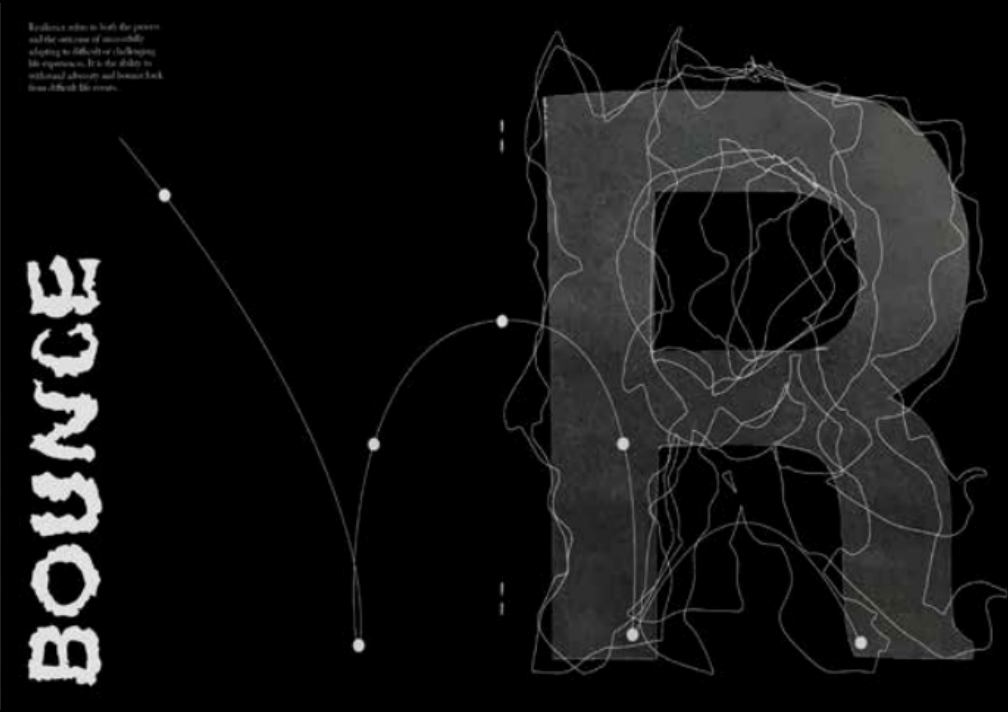
Resilience letterforms in 360° angles

Resilience Typeface Specimen
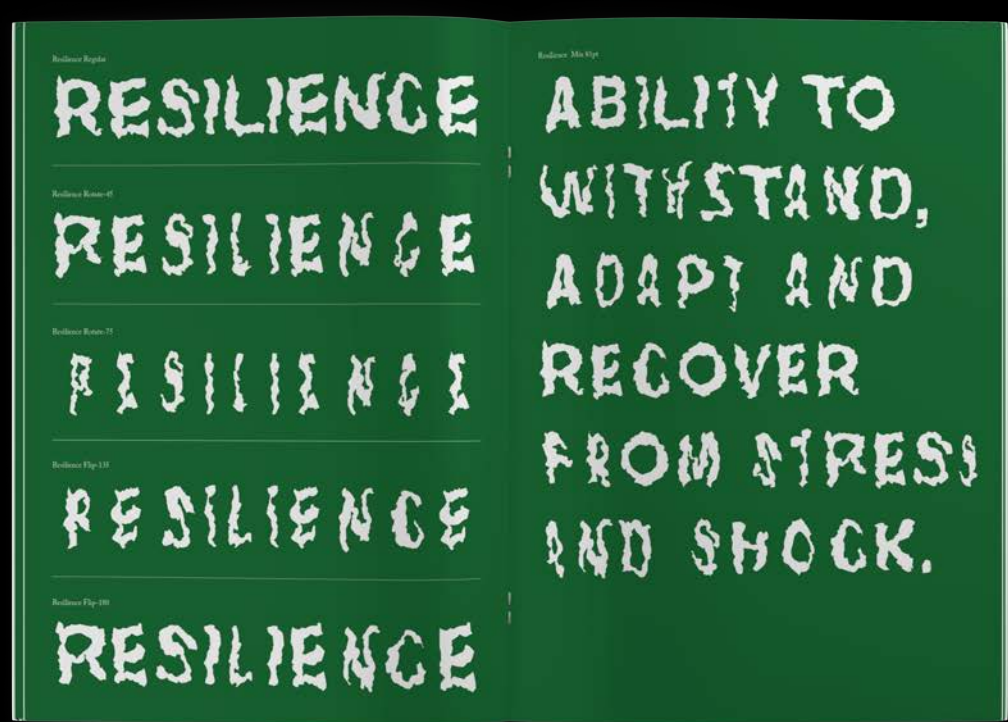
Chichi Zhao

XURUZ111@GMAIL.COM

CHICHIZHAO.COM