Selected Artist Research: Semester 2

Chiara van den Hoven

(Jan-Apr 2021)

Artists using archives:

Mimi Ọnụọha The Library of Missing Datasets (2016 and 2018)

Installation piece, "Missing data sets" are the blank spots that exist in spaces that are otherwise data-saturated. Wherever large amounts of data are collected, there are often empty spaces where no data live. The work takes the form of a physical filing cabinet, holding symbolic folders of missing data: highlighting racial and class biases in the US national statistics databases. Makes physical these missing sections and gaps- also very interactive.

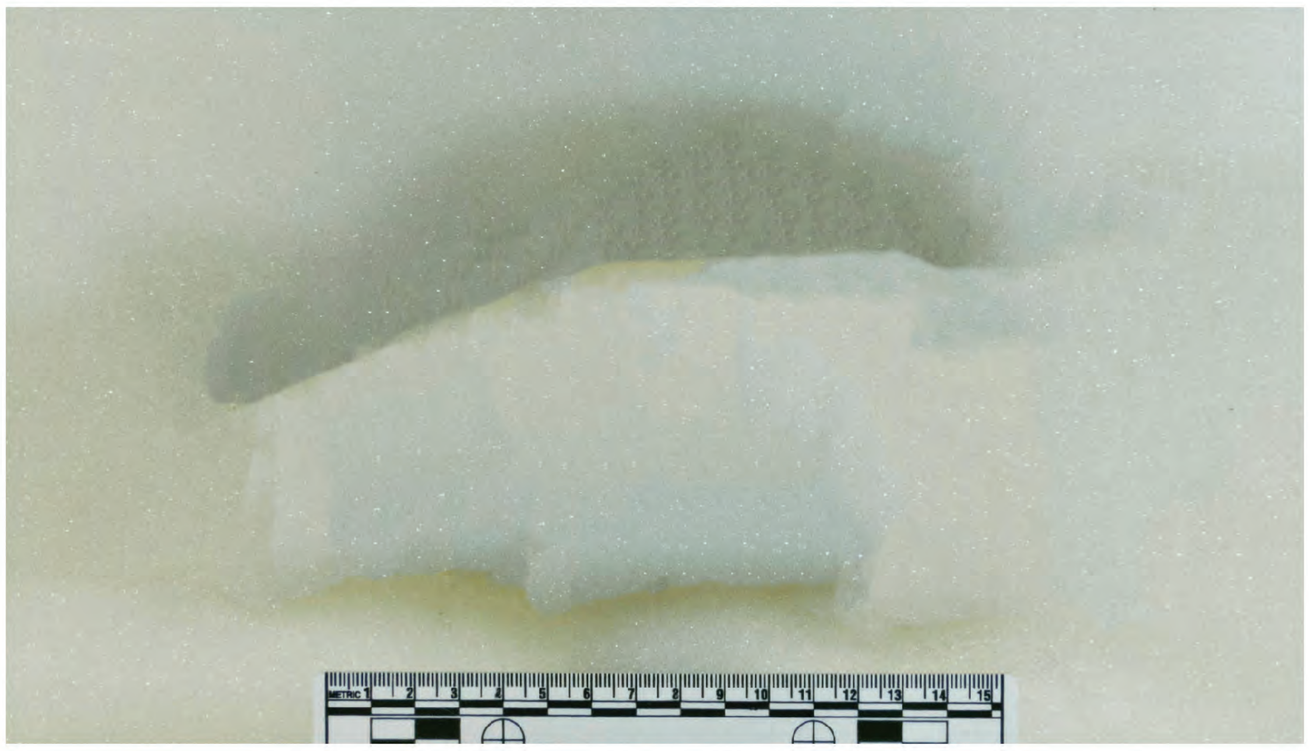
Andrew Norman Wilson, Scan Ops (2015)

Andrew Norman Wilson's ScanOps project examines the systems, people, and processes behind Google Books.

He says: "I have been collecting "anomalies" from Google Books for a couple of years: images in which software distortions, the imaging site, or the hands of the Google employees doing the scanning are visible. The fingers and software distortions obscure the information in the books—which complicates the notion of universally accessible knowledge..."

Artists using placeholder and calibration imagery:

Clement Valla, 'Smithsonian Deletions', 2018



Valla collects and publishes volumes of images that were found in the 'trash' folder of the Smithsonian digital collection. These images were too low quality, or were interrupted in some way, and the resulting publication has a strange, discordant and mysterious feel.

Very relevant to my inquiry into technical images and faults in digitisation! I like the recurring symbol of the ruler and the colour calibrator- they haunt these images.

Hito Steyerl, 'How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File' (2013)

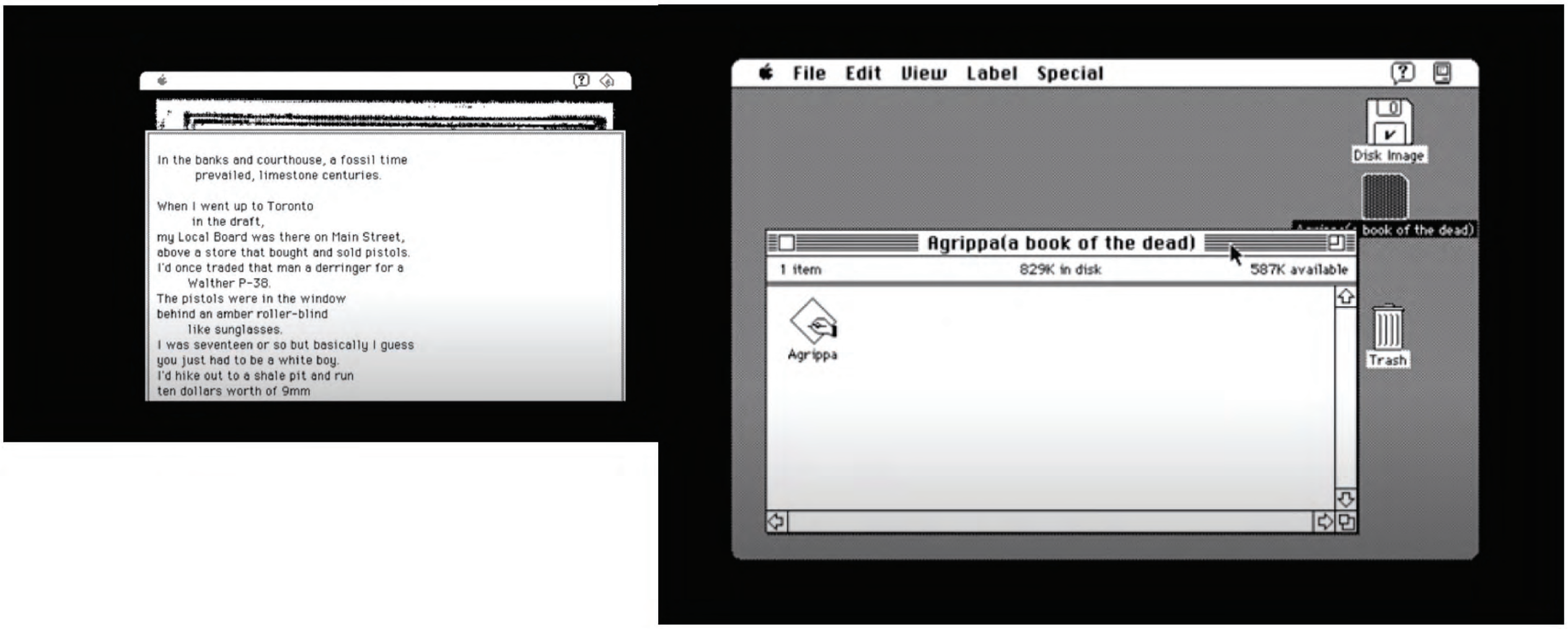
Video (color, sound), 14 min. Satirical 'How To' film, brilliantly captures the dynamics of images production and the splitting of the self that can occur in a surveilled state. Steyerl asks: "*How do people disappear in an age of total over-visibility?…Are people hidden by too many images?…Do they become images?*"

Among the video's central symbols is a real place: a patch of marked concrete in the California desert once used by the U.S. Air Force to calibrate their surveillance cameras. Calibration marks and camera vision occurs throughout- very key to understanding the ubiquity of these patterns, how they work their way into aesthetic truth and the public sphere.

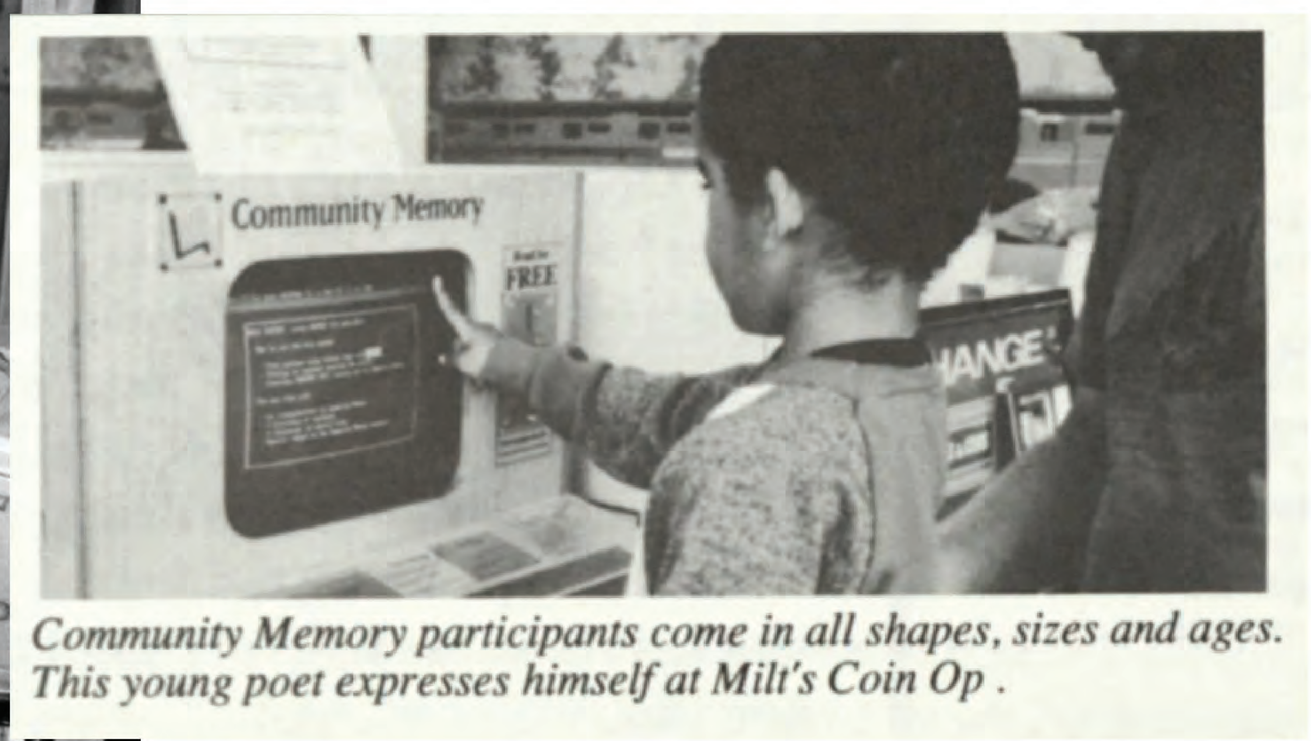
Artists using early computing software for poetic purposes:

William Gibson “Agrippa,” (1992)

William Gibson’s poem played from a 3½-inch diskette on a 1992-era Mac computer running the System 7 operating system. When the diskette ran, the text of the poem scrolled up the screen (accompanied by infrequent sound effects-a camera shutter click, a gun going off-while an encryption program on the diskette encoded each line and made the poem “disappear” after its first reading.



Community memory project, (1973) near the UC Berkeley, USA

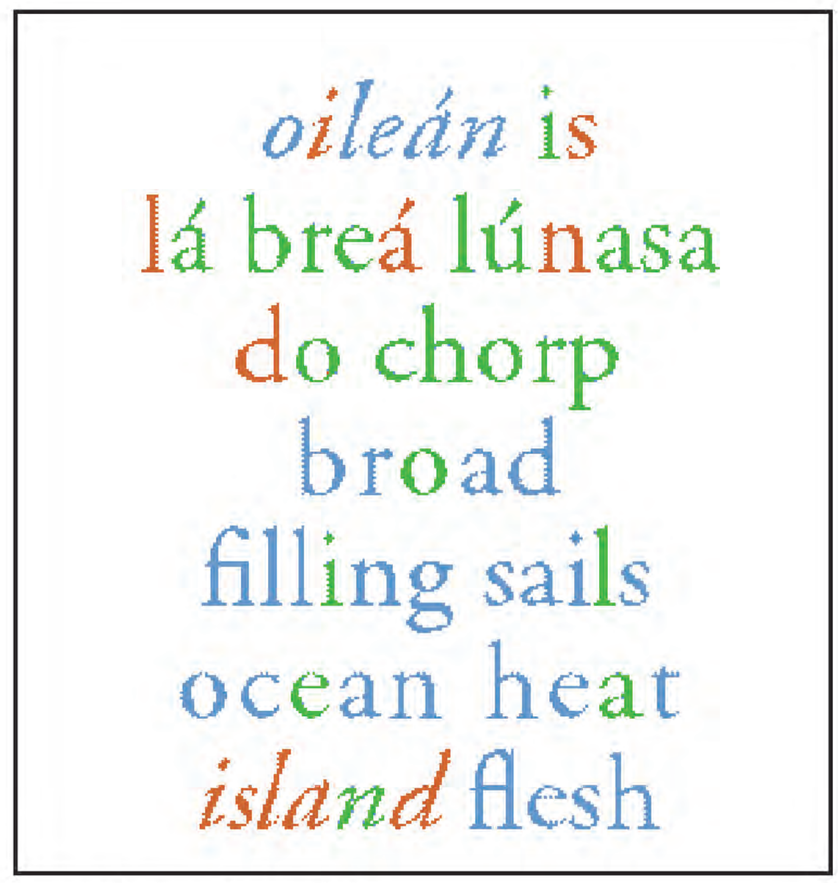


Community Memory participants come in all shapes, sizes and ages. This young poet expresses himself at Milt's Coin Op .

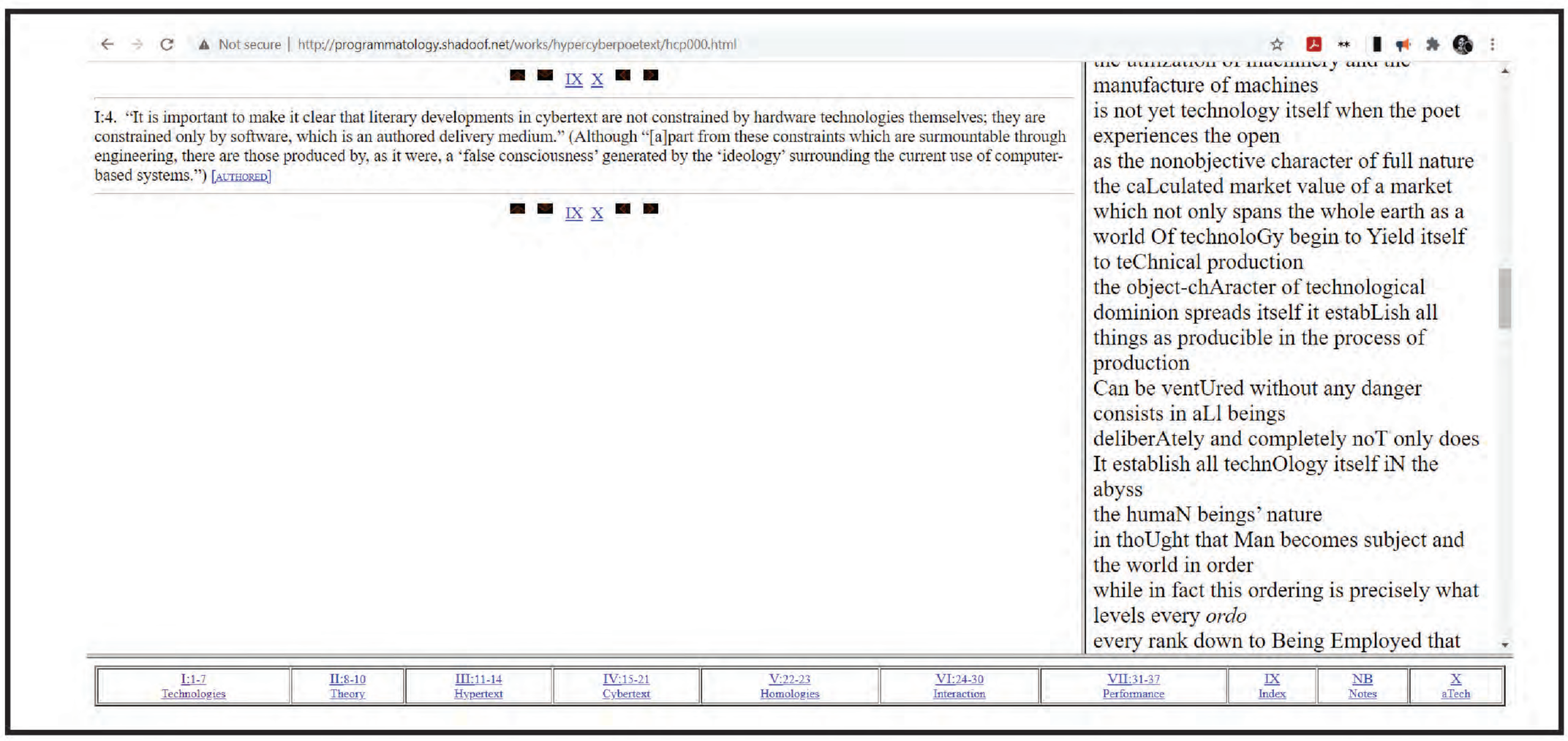
The First Public-Access Social Media System: Positioned in an entryway of a student-owned record store in front of a musician’s bulletin board, the system quickly attracted heavy usage by musicians, as might be expected, but also attracted items such as typewriter graphics, advertisements for a poet, and a spontaneous learning exchange item. The system went through three generations over a span of 19 years and was **structured as a community information exchange available to noncomputer users.** In the last generation, 10 terminals were base-level IBM PCs running text browsers on monochrome displays with coin acceptors attached.

John Cayley I N D R A ' S : N E T : o r : H O L O G O G R A P H Y

Midlands Art Centre, Birmingham, UK, May 1996



Indra's Net- Screengrab, showing morphing translations

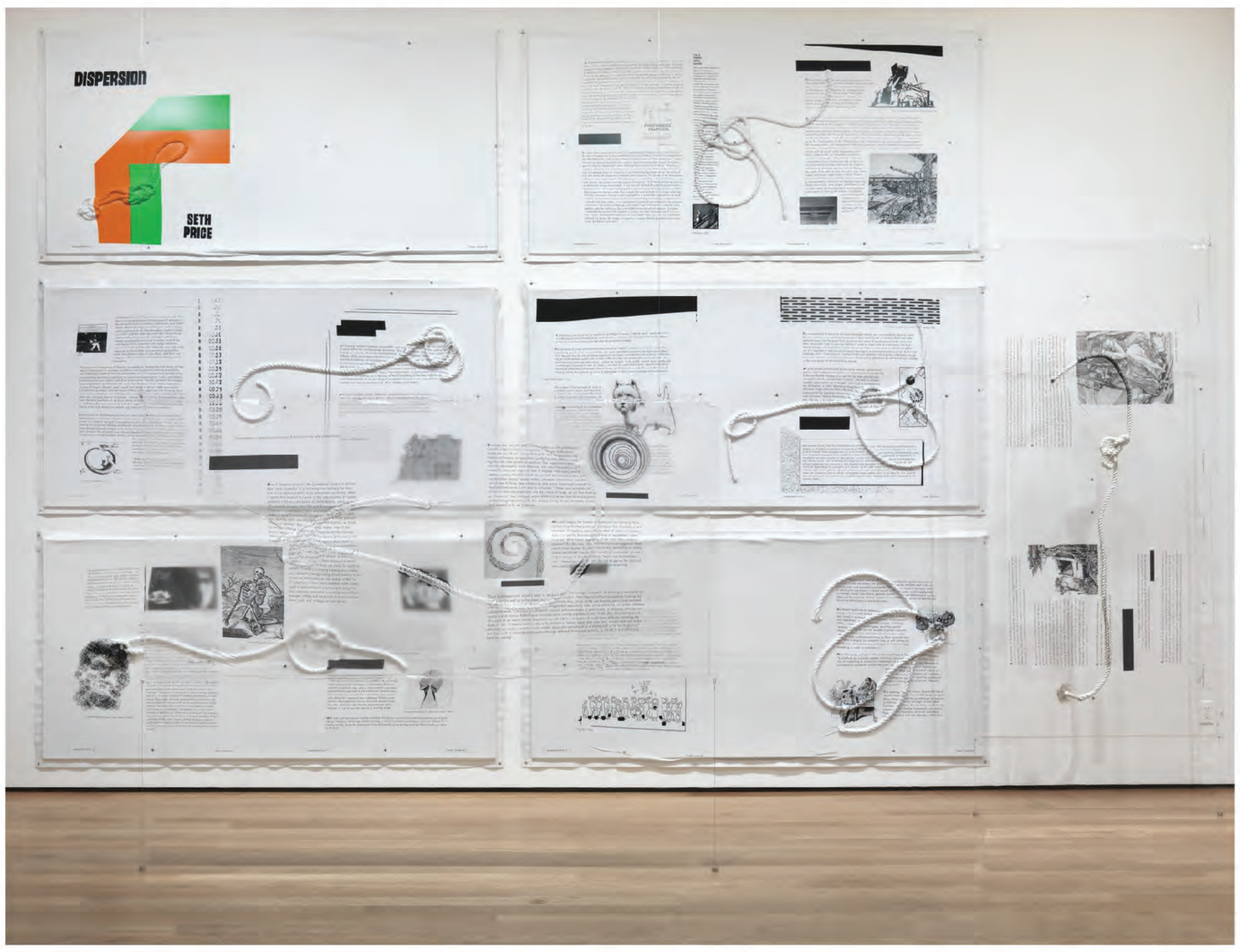


"A large part of aesthetic making will be, in these circumstances, stimulated by an imperative to respond, to react, and to engage in a poetics of, I propose, reconfiguration in order to generate those symbolic images that are demanded from us as part of a broader cultural poetics that is commensurate with networked computation, one that bears—one would hope—enough significance and affect to influence the trajectory of ongoing historical processes that might otherwise render us artless and careless."

John Cayley practices digital language arts, and has been a poet, translator, publisher, and bookdealer. Links to his writing in networked and programmable media are at http://programmatology.shadoof.net. Recent and ongoing projects include imposition, riverIsland, what we will, and The Readers Project (http://thereadersproject.org). His last printed book of poems, adaptations and translations was Ink Bamboo (Agenda & Belew, 1996).

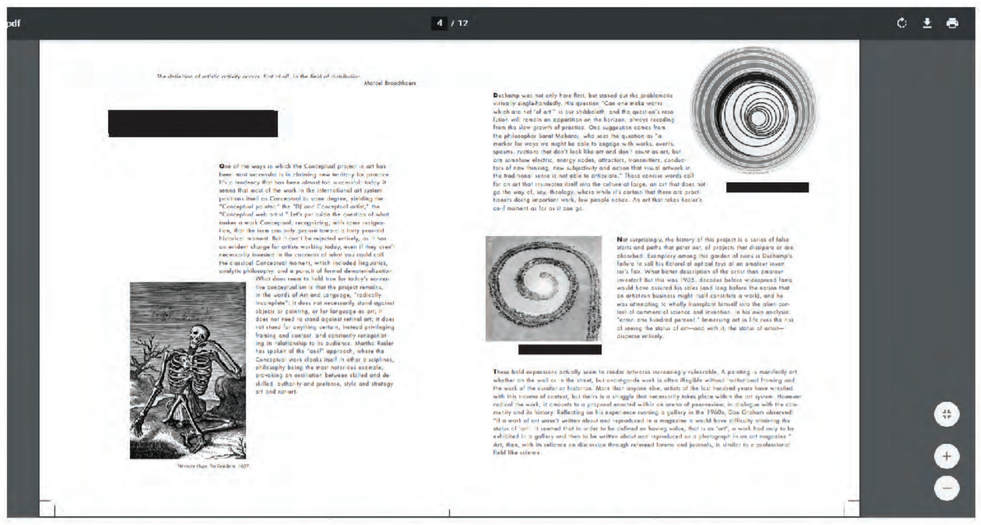
Artists using open-source publishing methods:

Seth Price: ‘Essay with Knots.’ (2008)



Screenprint ink on high-impact polystyrene and polyester, vacuum-formed over rope, nine panels.

(.pdf document of the essay was also circulated for free)



Price has circulated the piece in various forms, including the sculptural work on view here, in which the artist's Adobe InDesign files are printed on plastic and formed around knotted ropes using industrial packaging technology; a printed book available in stores; and a free PDF of the book available online. By positioning the work within different economic spheres—the art world, the retail market, and the free economy of the Internet—Price creates multiple possibilities of presentation that are all equally "the work." .

Aleksandra Domanovic: ‘Grobari’ and ‘Normals Facing Inwards’ (2008-12)

Page 162 November 2009

Private Circulation

Print this document on 32lb paper

GROBARI

TO commemorate the former Yugoslav Internet domain, .yu, which was set to expire last September but has since been extended until March 2010, I made a sculpture using an inkjet printer and 10,000 sheets of paper. The sculpture, resembling the one printed here, featured colored plumes of smoke fuming from the flares of football fans and hooligans.

Judging from the spate of violence that shortly followed, the choice of imagery proved sadly prophetic: French fan Brice Taton was severely beaten by a group of Grobari (*undertakers*) on 17 September 2009 and died twelve days later; Vedran Pulijć, a fan of the football club Sarajevo, was shot dead in hooligan riots before the match on 4 October 2009 in Široki Brijeg, Bosnia and Herzegovina; and another five Sarajevo fans were injured by gunfire.

In this version of the sculpture—which is black and white, the colors of Grobari—the flares used by the extremist football fans are suggestive of the recent tragic events. The images, found on the Web and isolated using Photoshop, were chosen as emblems of the continuing violence of a former country, which has lost the last official form of its identity, the virtual one.

—*Aleksandra Domanović*

INSTRUCTIONS:
1. Download *Grobari* [PDF, 180mb], A4 and US letter versions available
2. Set inkjet printer to borderless setting
3. Print, stack, and send a photograph of finished work

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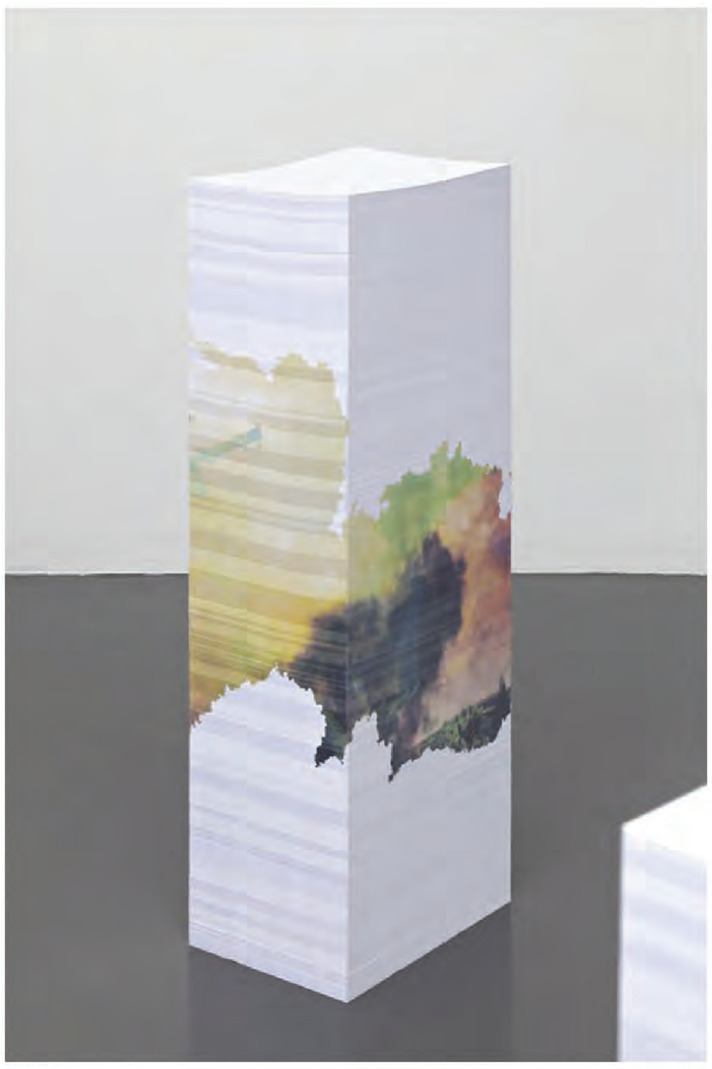


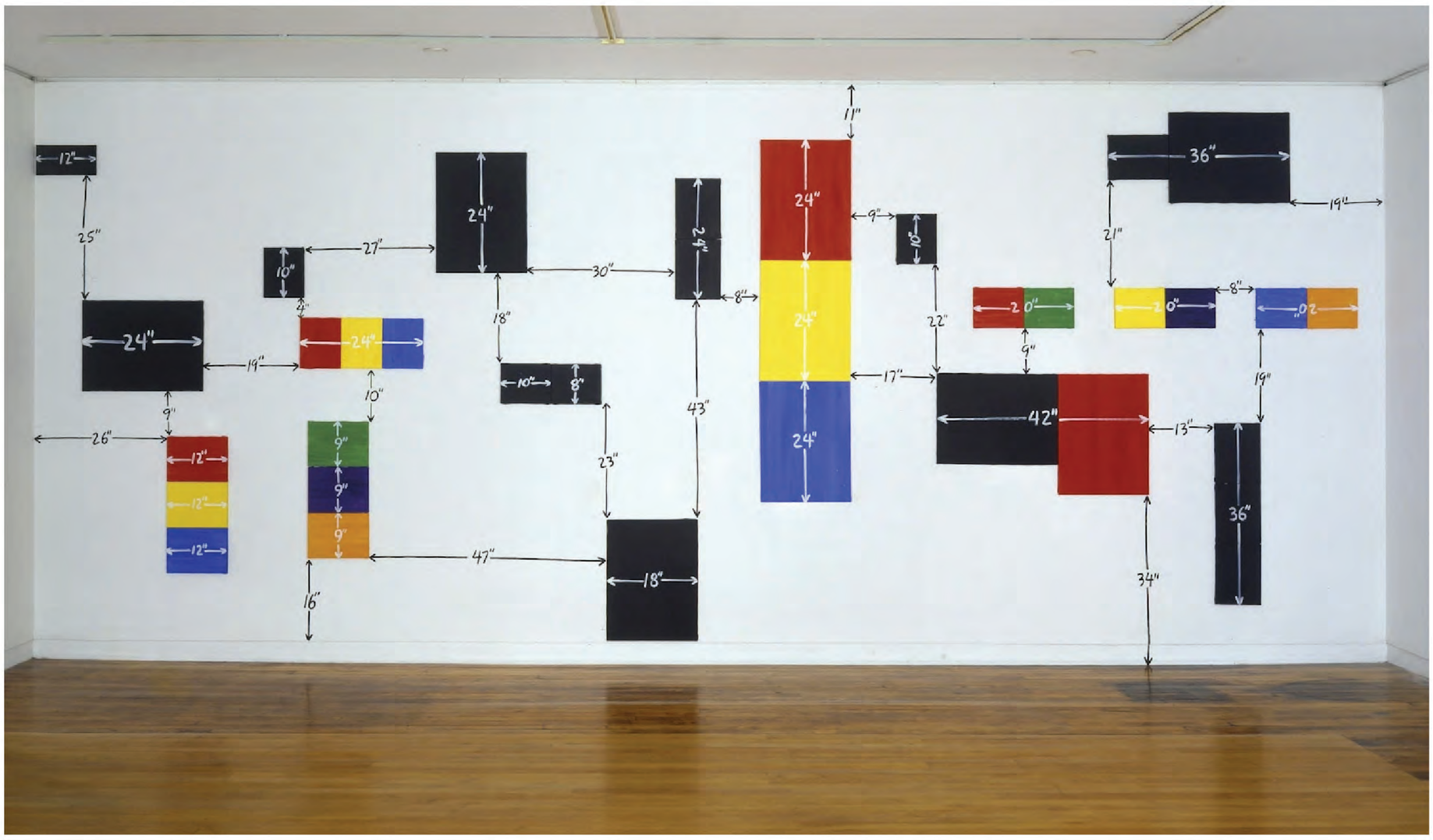
Very influential example of digital art: photograph of flares at a Serbian football match is converted to a border image on a pdf and printed on the outer border of A4 paper. The image becomes dependent on the alignment of the stack. The political undertones also become diffuse, communicated differently.

The pdf’s availability online removes the artist’s control: whoever wants to can replicate on modify this work (public or galleries!).

Artists using wall displays to map out systems:

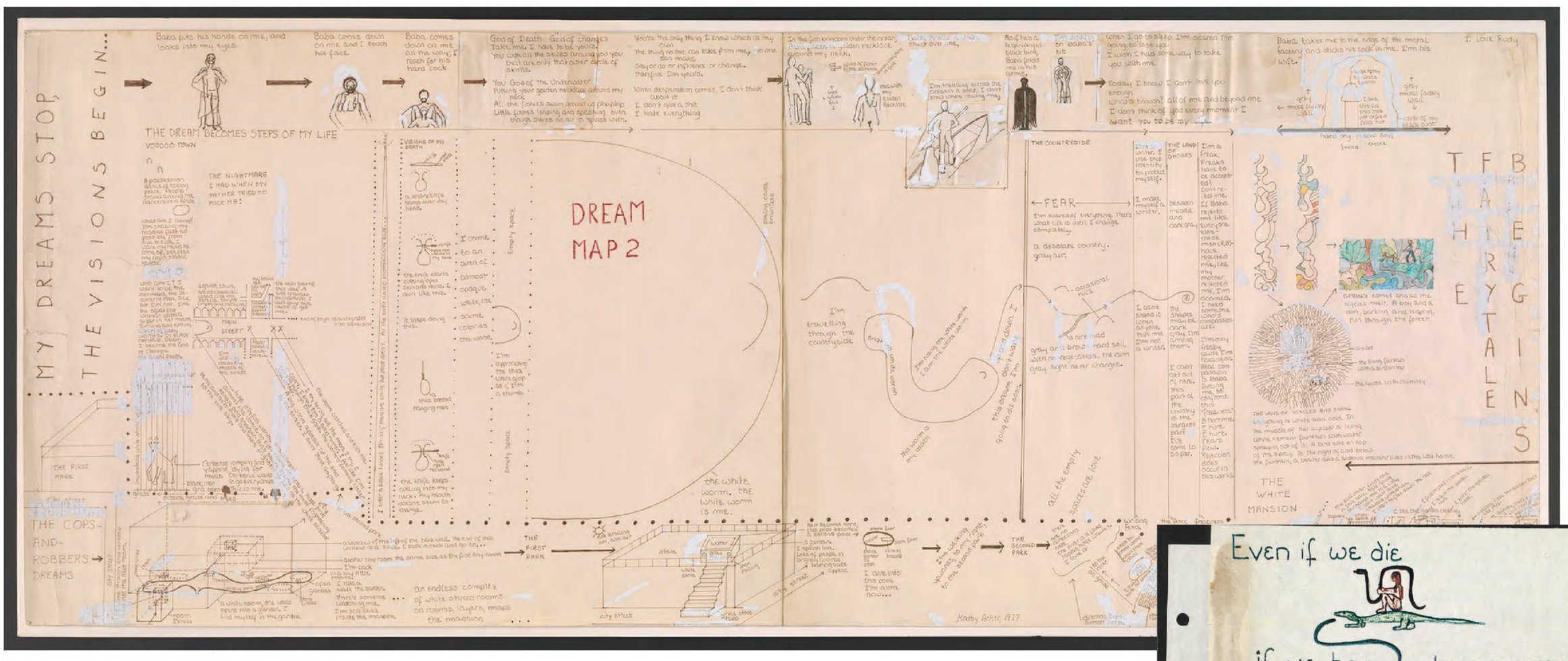
Mel Bochner, Rules of Evidence, (1996/1997)

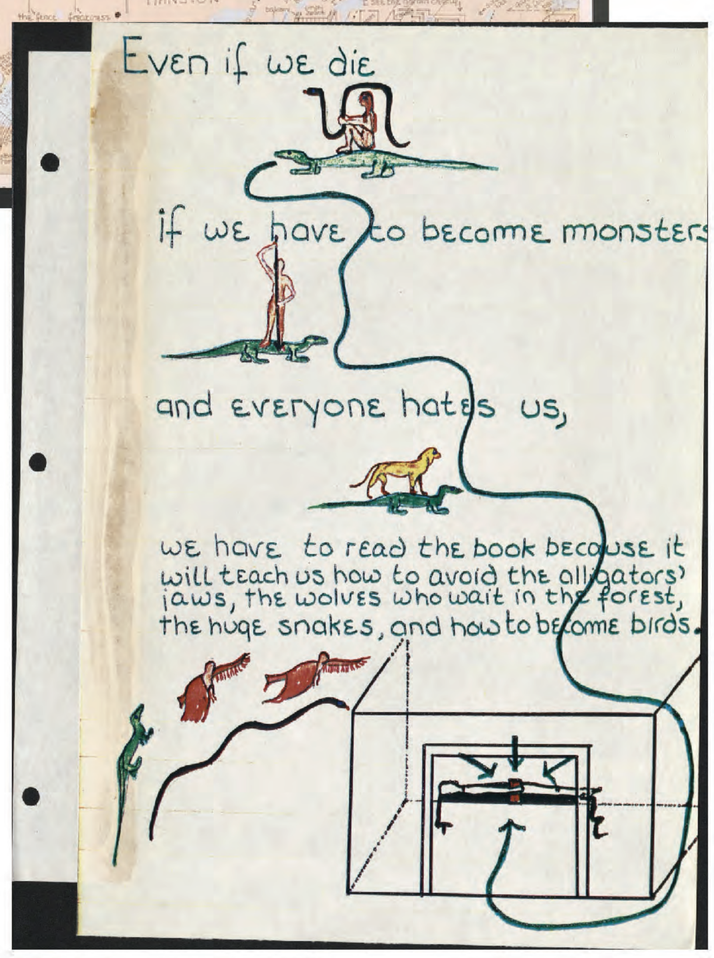
Oil and casein on 36 canvases, casein on wall. Size determined by installation



Bochner has a huge body of work concerned with maths, measurement, technical systems: *"Most of the above concerns are formal, structural concerns in nature. But if my means are aesthetic, my ends are not. The work's value must rest on the clarity of its meaning."*

Kathy Acker, Dream Map 2 (circa 1980)





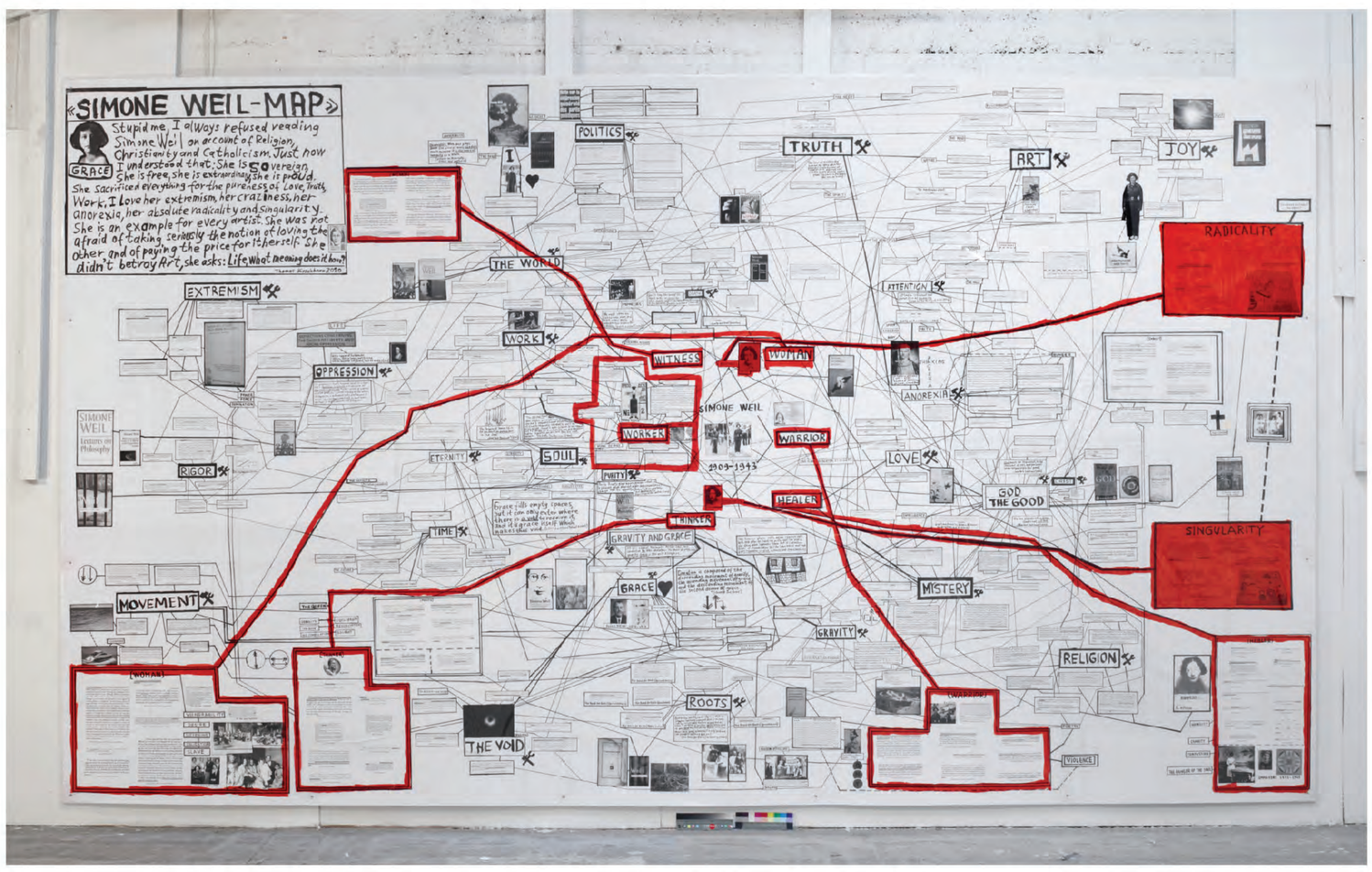
Very early diagrams from Acker: a playful way of constructing narratives for her later novels, these dream maps were made to sketch out and describe characters and places that recurred in her dreams.

Interests me because it's completely analogue, but still functions as a kind of personal archive, very immediate sense of density and flow.

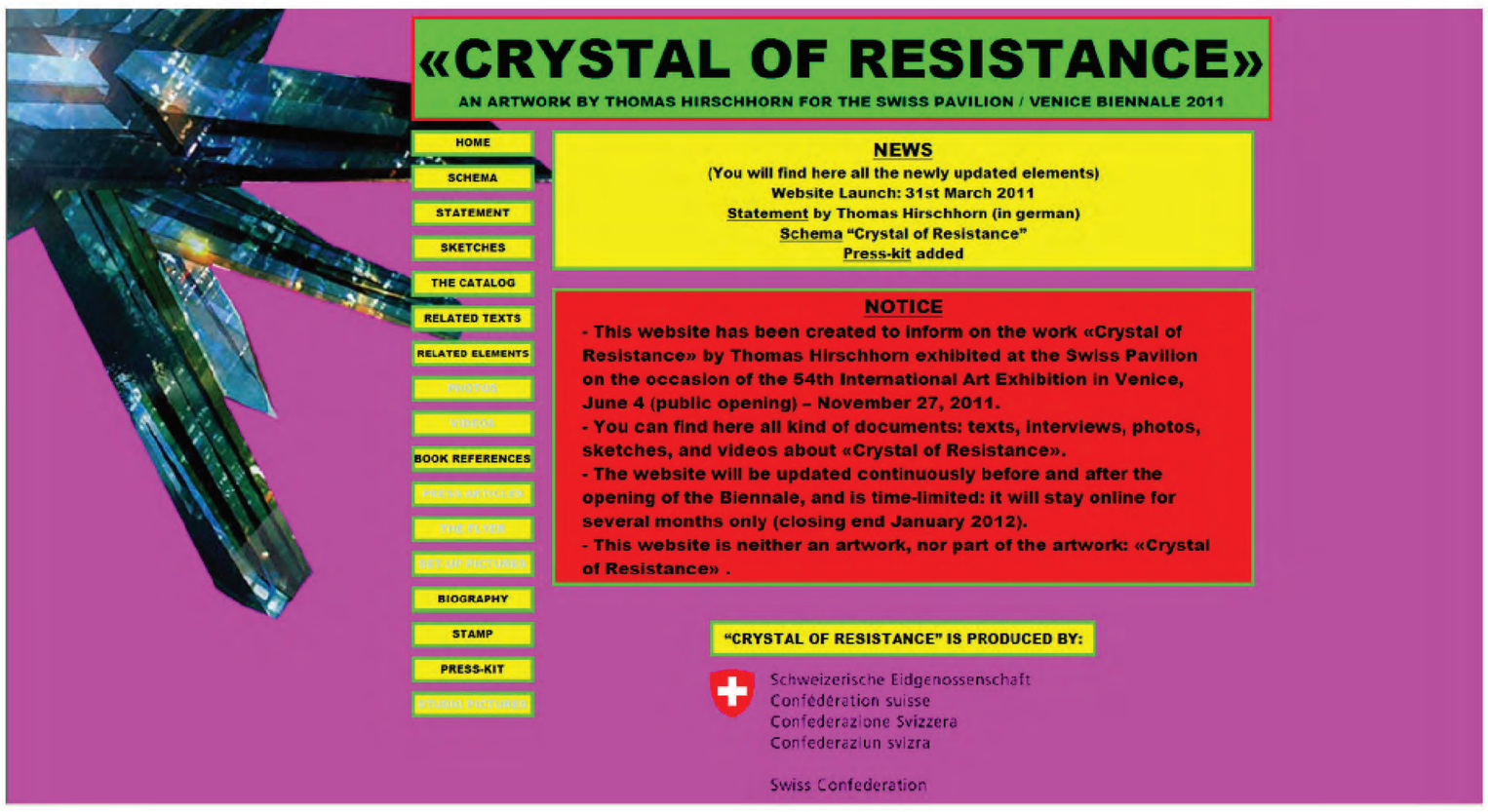
Thomas Hirschhorn, Timeline: Work in Public Space (2012).

Timeline, a large-scale collage of images, written statements, and text excerpts, chronicles the artist's interventions at urban and rural sites.

Almost like a meta-textual retrospective. I love the density of this wall of information, and the bold connections. Hirschorn's work often feels very energetic and generous.



What kind of research database does Hirschorn begin with though? Is it digital? That would make these works transciptions BACK into analogue means. I like all these layers of media translation.



Website design for 'Crystals of Resistance', public art project.

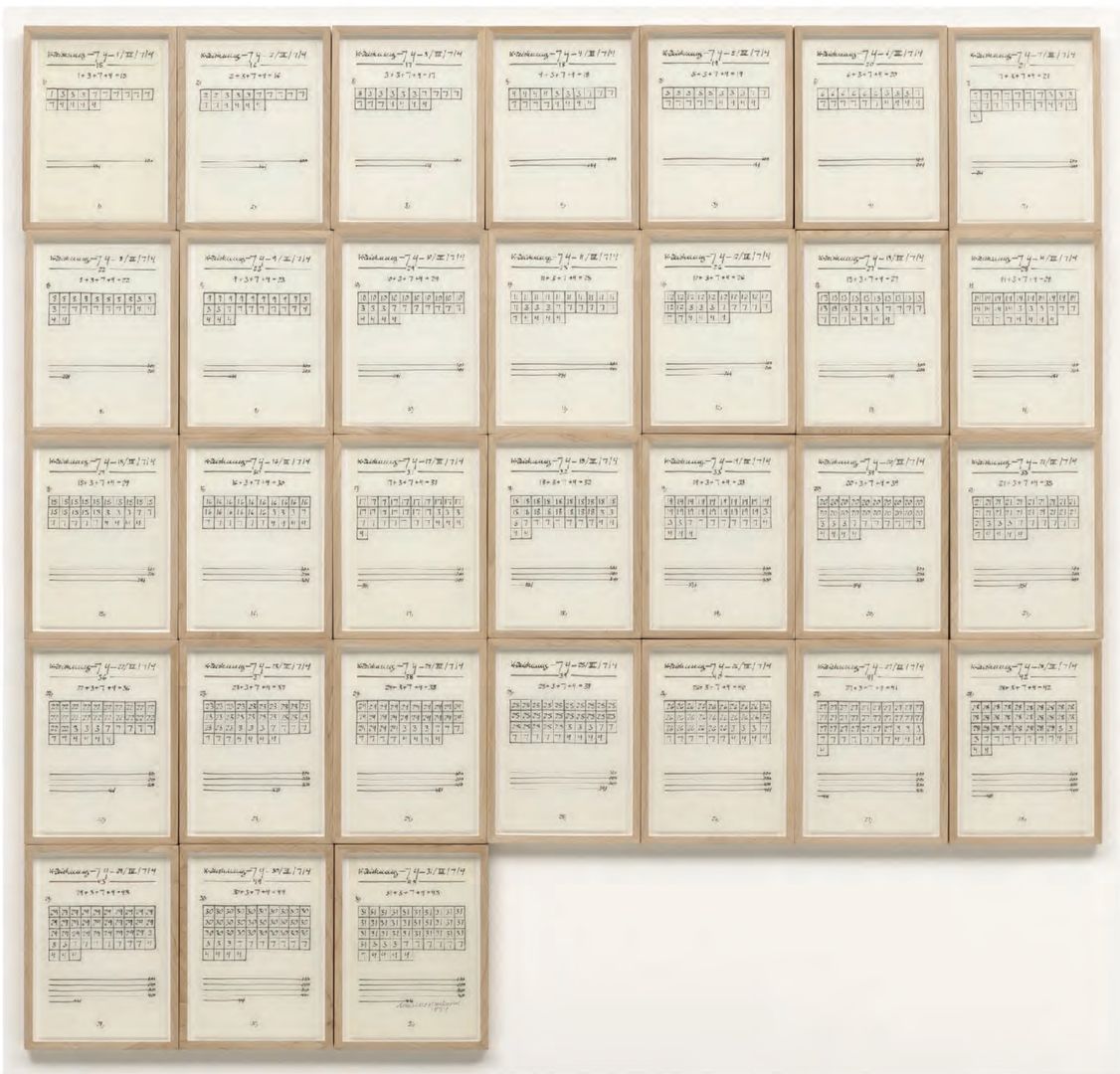
Bright, simple, old school: no javascript!

I would be interested to know if he digitises his wall works, if at all. Sometimes it seems as if destruction is the point!

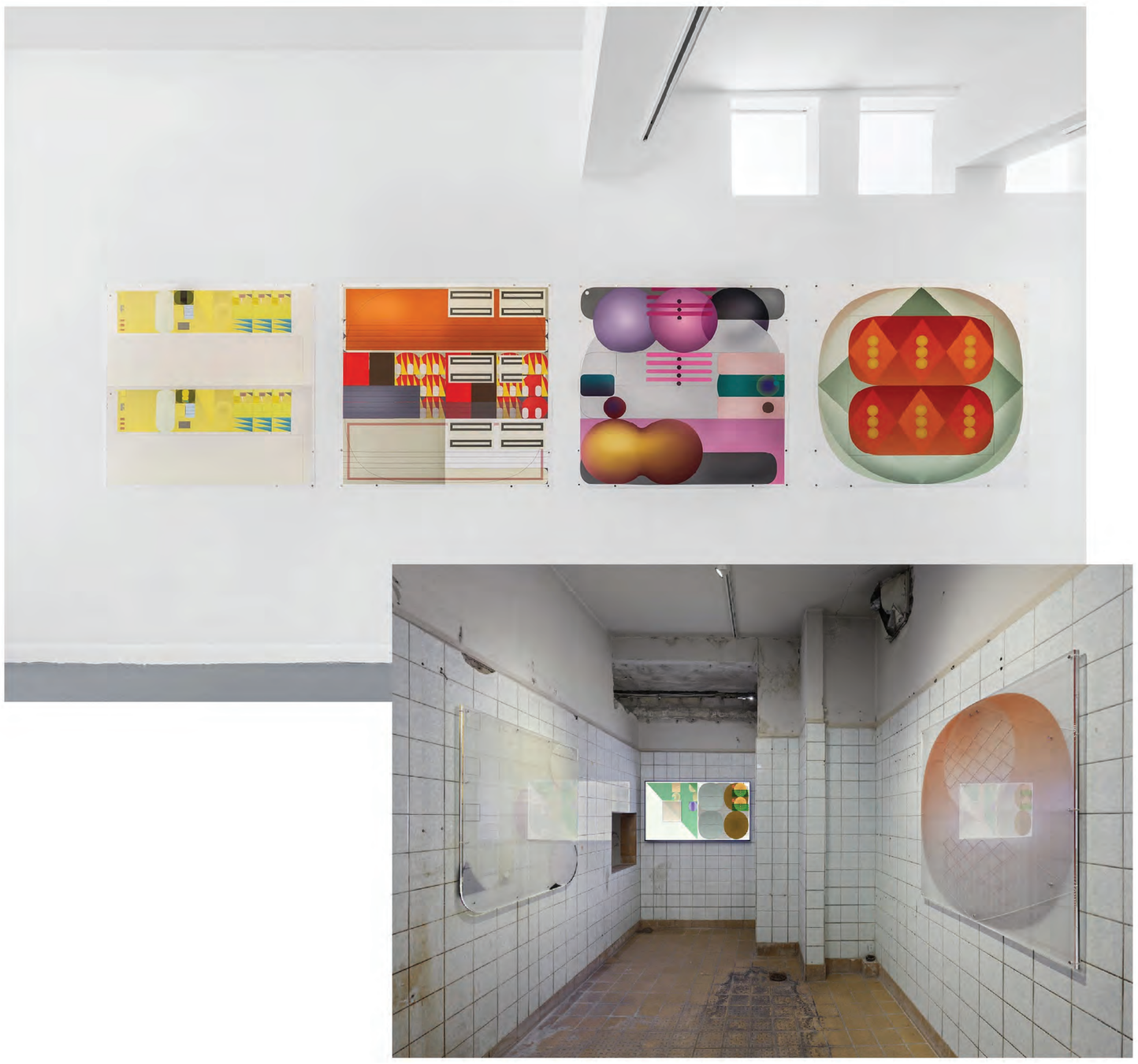
Hanne Darboven, Month III (March) (1974)

Using numbers as "a way of writing without describing," Darboven based much of her work on the calendar. In 1968, when a new generation of artists was making conceptual, process-oriented works, Darboven began creating labor-intensive drawings based on the addition of the digits that make up a date (day + month + year). Her emphasis on process and duration makes time both the raw material and the subject of her art. Like a journal or a diary, her work documents her life, but her use of mathematical procedures ensures that her personal history is kept private. Like an encrypted diary! I like her insistence upon privacy!

Ink on 31 pieces of transparentized paper
Installation: 66 1/2 x 70 x 1 1/2" (168.9 x 177.8 x 3.8 cm)



Harm van den Doerpel, Vertiginous Data, MMCA, Seoul, (2019)



"Much of the software we use has artefacts from many moments in the lineage of computer science."

Big name in net art, van den Doerpel uses neural networks and data science to create strange colourful overlays- each shape is the product of a long series of calculations and processes. They almost mimic the form of a spreadsheet: very ordered and fractal.

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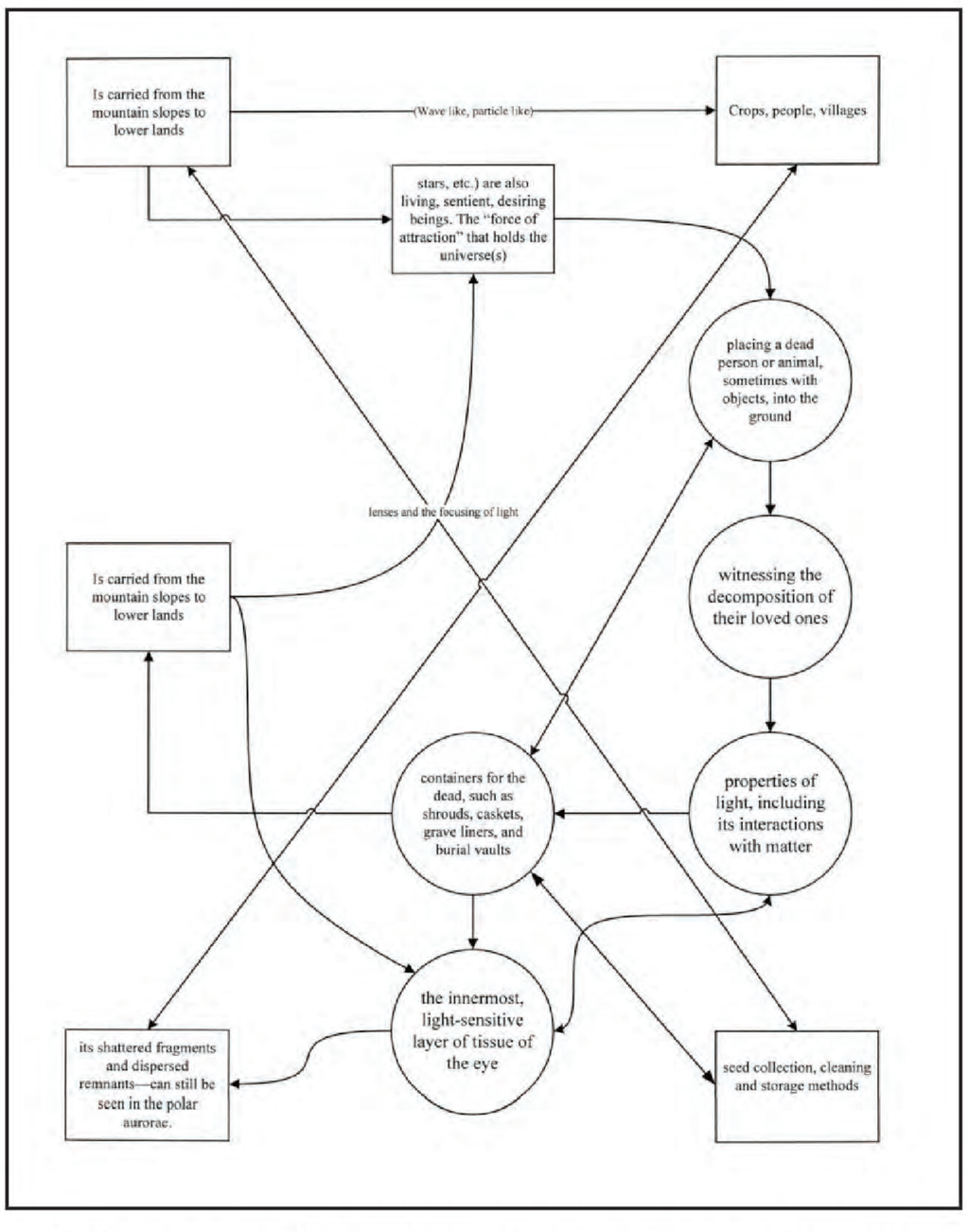
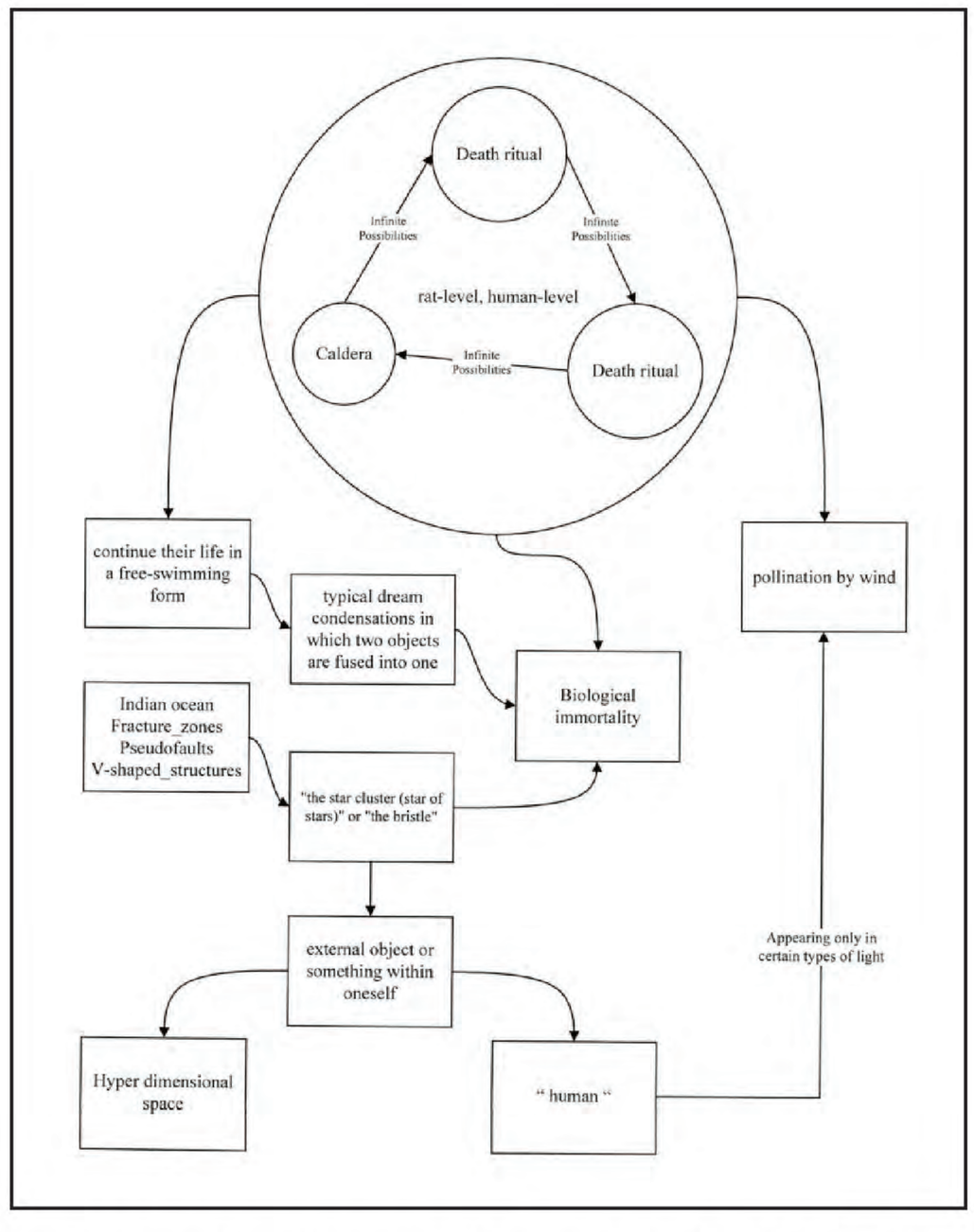
Micah Schippa: Earth Sciences (2019)

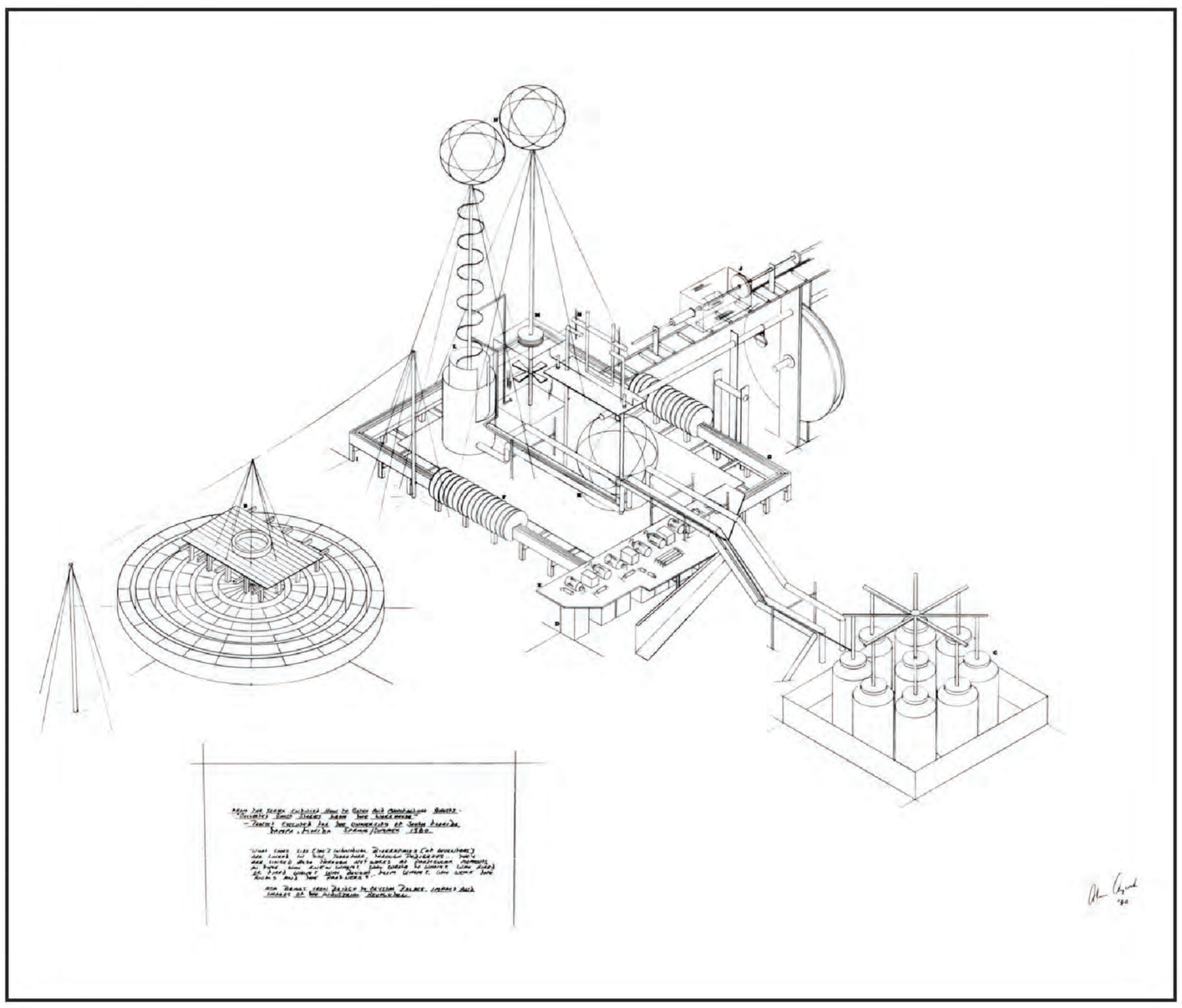




Schippa makes digital diagrams of bodily processes (such as saliva production, bodily decay, breathing) and fuses it with various fictional/fantasy events. I think the control of these diagrams (monochrome, simple line, high-quality) allows him to be so wild and esoteric with his ideas. Manages to sneak high fantasy into a technical image...

The text used in each small section is also very poetic: I read these almost as a stanza, like a poem spread out and made into a directed reading experience.

Alice Aycock: *How to Catch and Manufacture Ghosts (1981)*



Demonstrates a way of including fiction and conjecture into formal works. Aycock often uses fringe elements mysticism and scientific theory blended together.

These illustrations manage to retain a formal quality- enough of an elevated tone to be taken seriously. This is what makes them so persuasive. Equally, the intricacy and control of the line is so beautiful and purposeful, somehow engages you more deeply with the idea (if the line were very expressive, Kaprow-style, I think it would be easier to dismiss the structure she's proposing.)

Artists making films about poetry and communication:

Fabien Giraud, Raphaël Siboni, The Unmanned: 1997 and The Brute Force, 2014

Film series that recounts a nonhuman history of technology. Eliminating all instrumental conceptions and at the same time making people a simple expression of its movement, the series traces the path of »unmanned« technology taking the example of self-driving vehicles in contemporary warfare.

In its first season, »A History of Computation«, the artists explore the invention and consequences of modern computation, tracing the history of the algorithm from its emergence in modern mathematics to its

Édouard Glissant with Manthia Diawara: One World in Relation (2010).

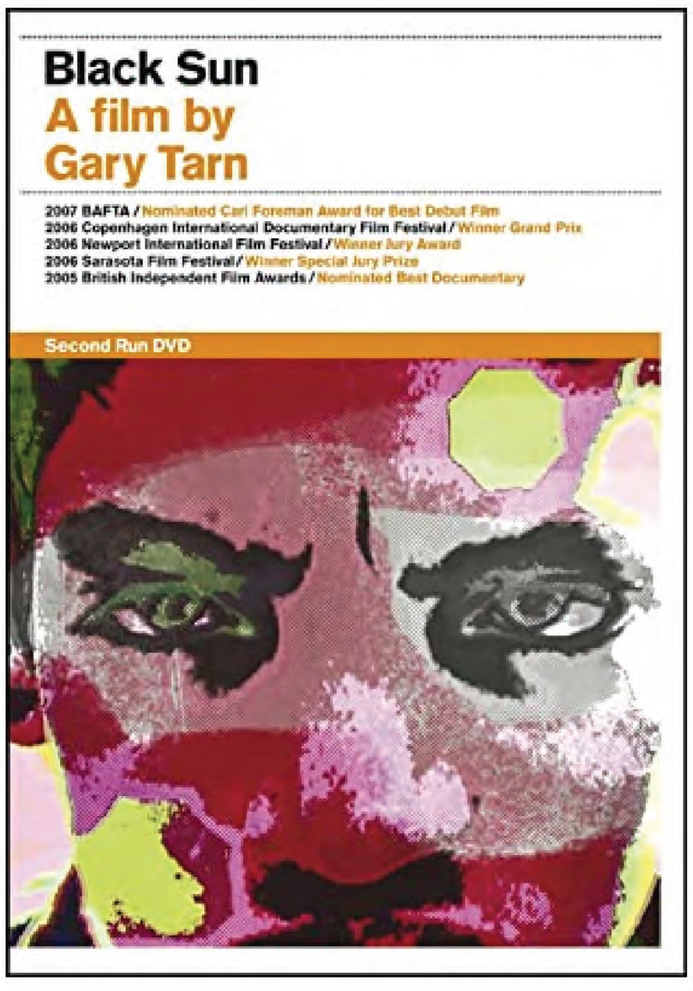
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTNVe_BAELY

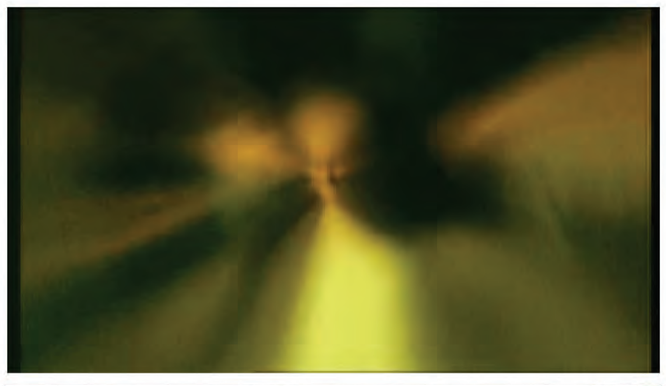
Artist's talk available here: https://vimeo.com/88894117, viewed 12/02/21.

Glissant's 'Poetics of Relation' was a highly influential volume of essays: this film traces Glissant's journey back to Martinique, and follows his thoughts on cultural memory, heritage, opacity and poetics.

Gorgeous, slow, languid film, very sensitively made. Massive insights about the possibilities of communication and translation differences.

Gary Tarn, 'Black Sun' (2005)





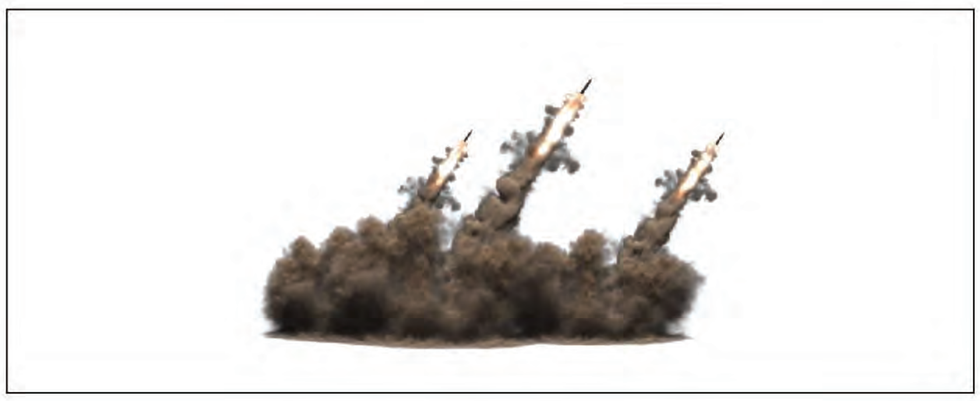
Documentary about a man who lost his vision: narrates his loss, his coping with loss of beauty, confusion and ultimate acceptance of other senses. Very beautiful way of dealing with irreversible, permanent loss, or having to reckon with a profound alienation from the body.

Tarn replaces some original footage with thermal and technical mapping imagery, which supplants the human eye. These merge together with poetic descriptions, and highlight the difference between the camera's eye and our own. Approaches the problem of losing images, and the relationship of image to memory.

Oliver Laric: *Versions* (2012)
[animated film with voiceover, 12mins]

"I've only seen paintings of this painting. The more it is known, the more it is inscribed."

"There is no There there. Aesthetics and linguistic practice move beyond mere dichotomies, towards a state in which the conditions of a word as a phonetic particle and a semantic wave exist at the same time."



I like his thesis: hybridise or diappear. I'd like to know what actually constitutes this disappearance, and whether it could be something worth doing, worth being dedicated to.

'Versions' makes reference to linguistic actions- the hyphen, translation, phonetics, semantics– to understand what's going on online. This framing is clarifying, particularly in relation to Glissant ('… a lingua franca…is always apoetical'). Thinking about digital networks as fundamentally language-based opens lots of very good doors!

The film very concisely ties up lots of obscure and difficult research- massive skill! Something to aim for! I think the restraint of the images combines well with the complexity of what the voiceover is saying. Maybe a good thing to try- time-based media?

Artists using found text and poems:

Micah Schippa, Untitled (Seattle), 2019

Text extracted from medical textbooks and grave-treatment manuals, organised and finished on a series of canvases. The formatting of this text, including the font and tone of the paper is very minimal, elegant and engaging...The subject material- strange sentences about bodily decay and chemical treatments- is accentuated by this, and Schippa also uses normal packing tape to ‘finish’ the surfaces of the pages. This is eerie- makes then seem suffocated.

UbuWeb: Concrete Poetry Archives

(https://ubu.com/vp/)

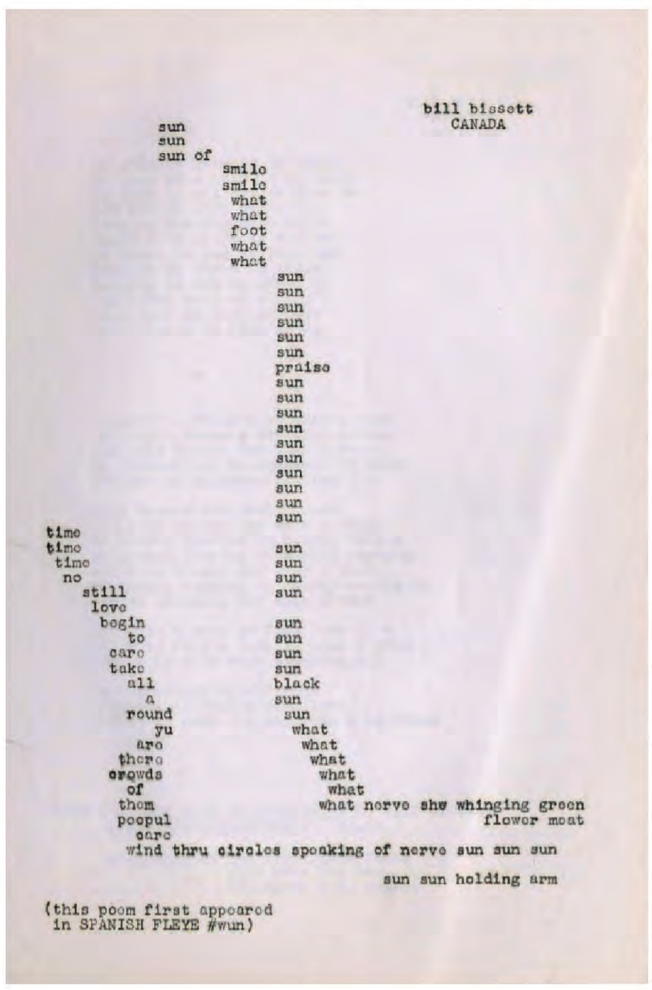
Text works- letting poetry out of its rigid structures. Using both poetic language and attention to the composition of a page...typography and text as the medium.

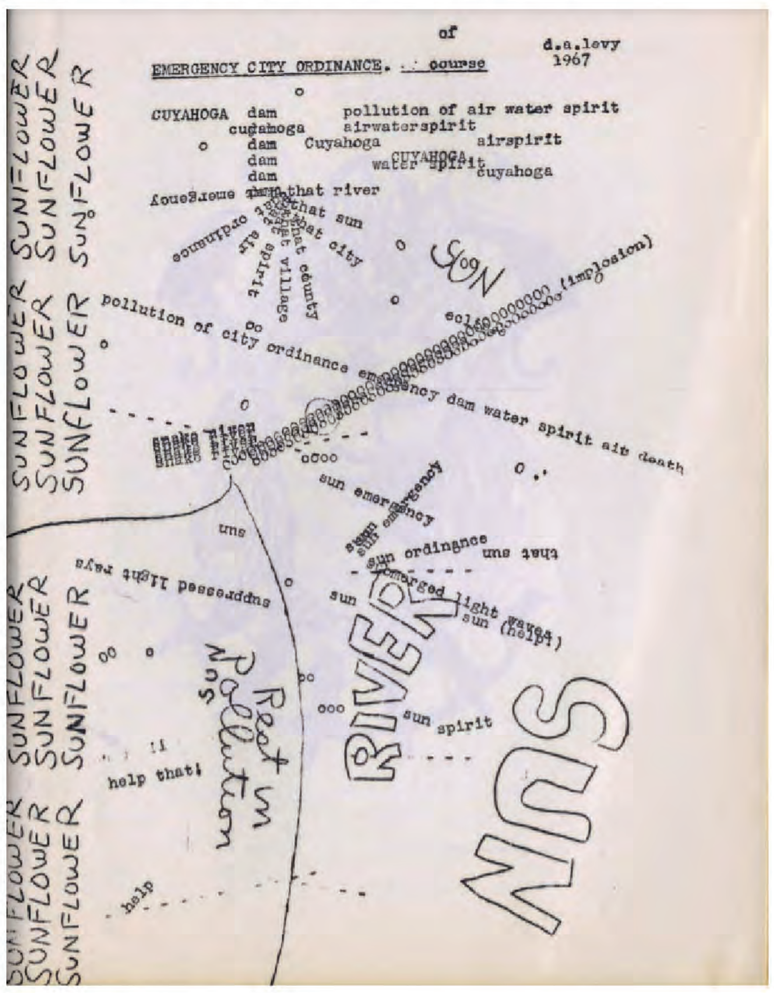
Archive- great, simple web design. Archival columns containing open source .pdfs- good way of retaining and maintaining info. You get a good sense of scale from the listing: contents are not obscured in a pagination...

Would love to see the file directory system behind this site?

Also interested in the aesthetic of the scanned image! Quite a different experience to viewing a purely digital thing...

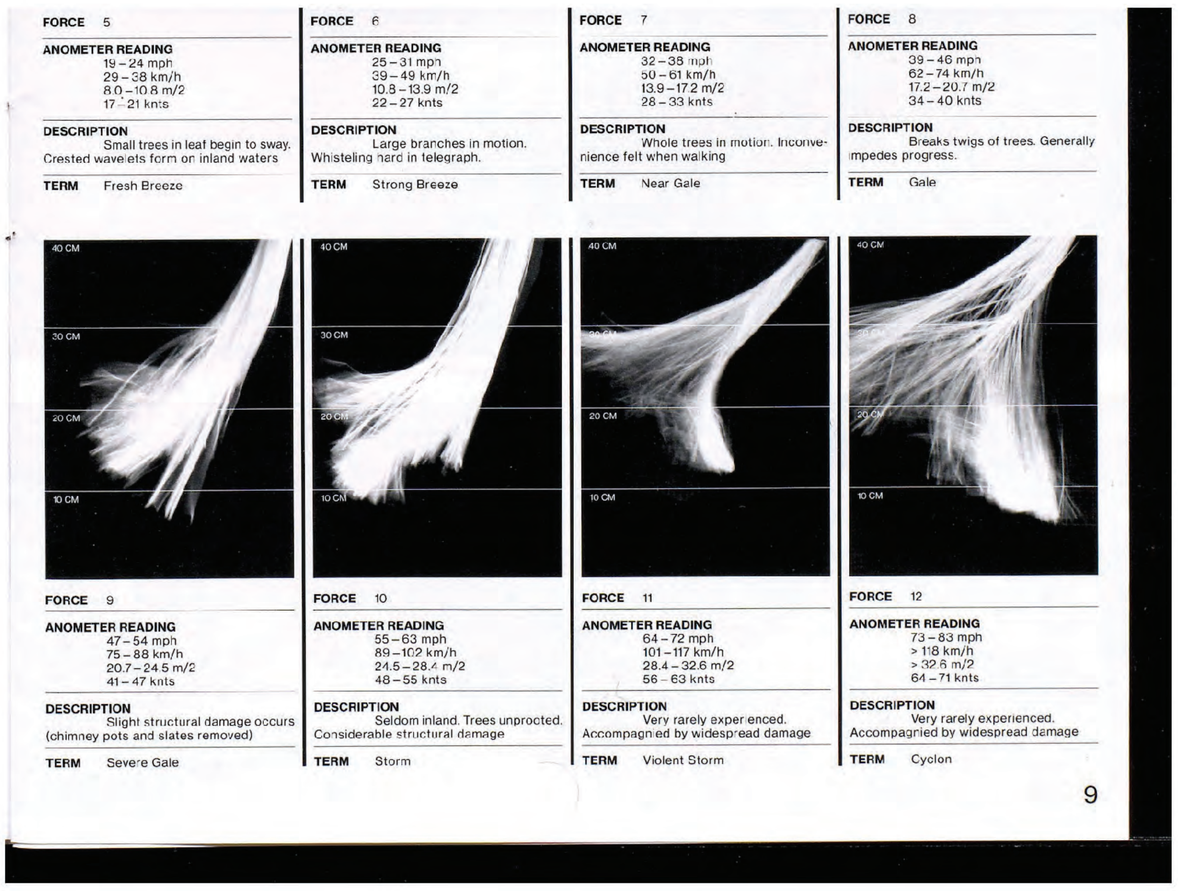
Pages from the ‘Marrahwannah Quarterly’ (1964-1967)





Artists using catalogues as a medium:

Cybu Richli and Beatrice Kaufmann
Atlas der Katastrophen, (publication), 2014



FORCE 5
ANOMETER READING 19 – 24 mph, 29 – 38 km/h, 8.0 – 10.8 m/2, 17 – 21 knts
DESCRIPTION Small trees in leaf begin to sway. Crested wavelets form on inland waters
TERM Fresh Breeze

FORCE 6
ANOMETER READING 25 – 31 mph, 39 – 49 km/h, 10.8 – 13.9 m/2, 22 – 27 knts
DESCRIPTION Large branches in motion. Whisteling hard in telegraph.
TERM Strong Breeze

FORCE 7
ANOMETER READING 32 – 38 mph, 50 – 61 km/h, 13.9 – 17.2 m/2, 28 – 33 knts
DESCRIPTION Whole trees in motion. Inconvenience felt when walking
TERM Near Gale

FORCE 8
ANOMETER READING 39 – 46 mph, 62 – 74 km/h, 17.2 – 20.7 m/2, 34 – 40 knts
DESCRIPTION Breaks twigs of trees. Generally impedes progress.
TERM Gale

40 CM, 30 CM, 20 CM, 10 CM

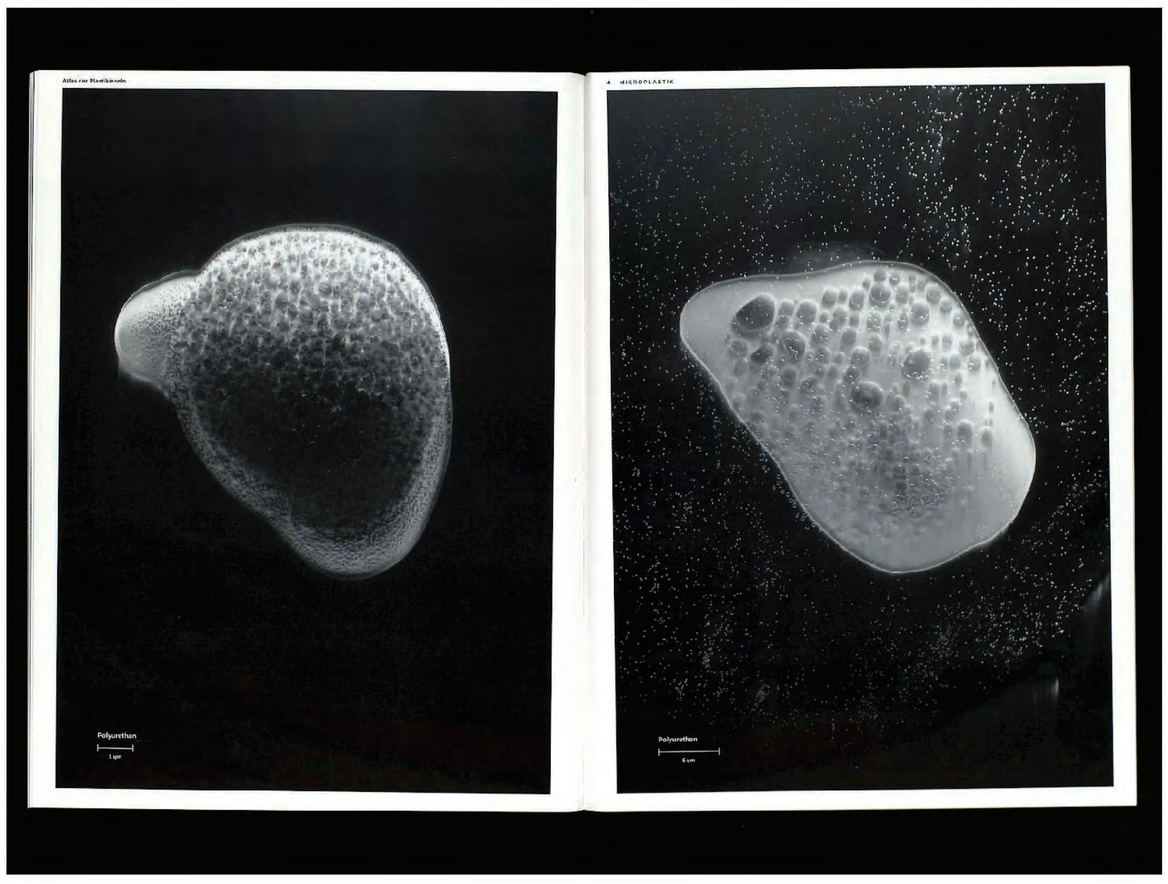
FORCE 9
ANOMETER READING 47 – 54 mph, 75 – 88 km/h, 20.7 – 24.5 m/2, 41 – 47 knts
DESCRIPTION Slight structural damage occurs (chimney pots and slates removed)
TERM Severe Gale

FORCE 10
ANOMETER READING 55 – 63 mph, 89 – 102 km/h, 24.5 – 28.4 m/2, 48 – 55 knts
DESCRIPTION Seldom inland. Trees unprocted. Considerable structural damage
TERM Storm

FORCE 11
ANOMETER READING 64 – 72 mph, 101 – 117 km/h, 28.4 – 32.6 m/2, 56 – 63 knts
DESCRIPTION Very rarely experienced. Accompagnied by widespread damage
TERM Violent Storm

FORCE 12
ANOMETER READING 73 – 83 mph, > 118 km/h, > 32.6 m/2, 64 – 71 knts
DESCRIPTION Very rarely experienced. Accompagnied by widespread damage
TERM Cyclon

9



Research project at the Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, bookwork using b/w photography to illustrate geographical phenomena. An example of an updated archive, replacing old images with new allegories. Stunning graphics and scans: hijacks the aesthetics of textbooks.

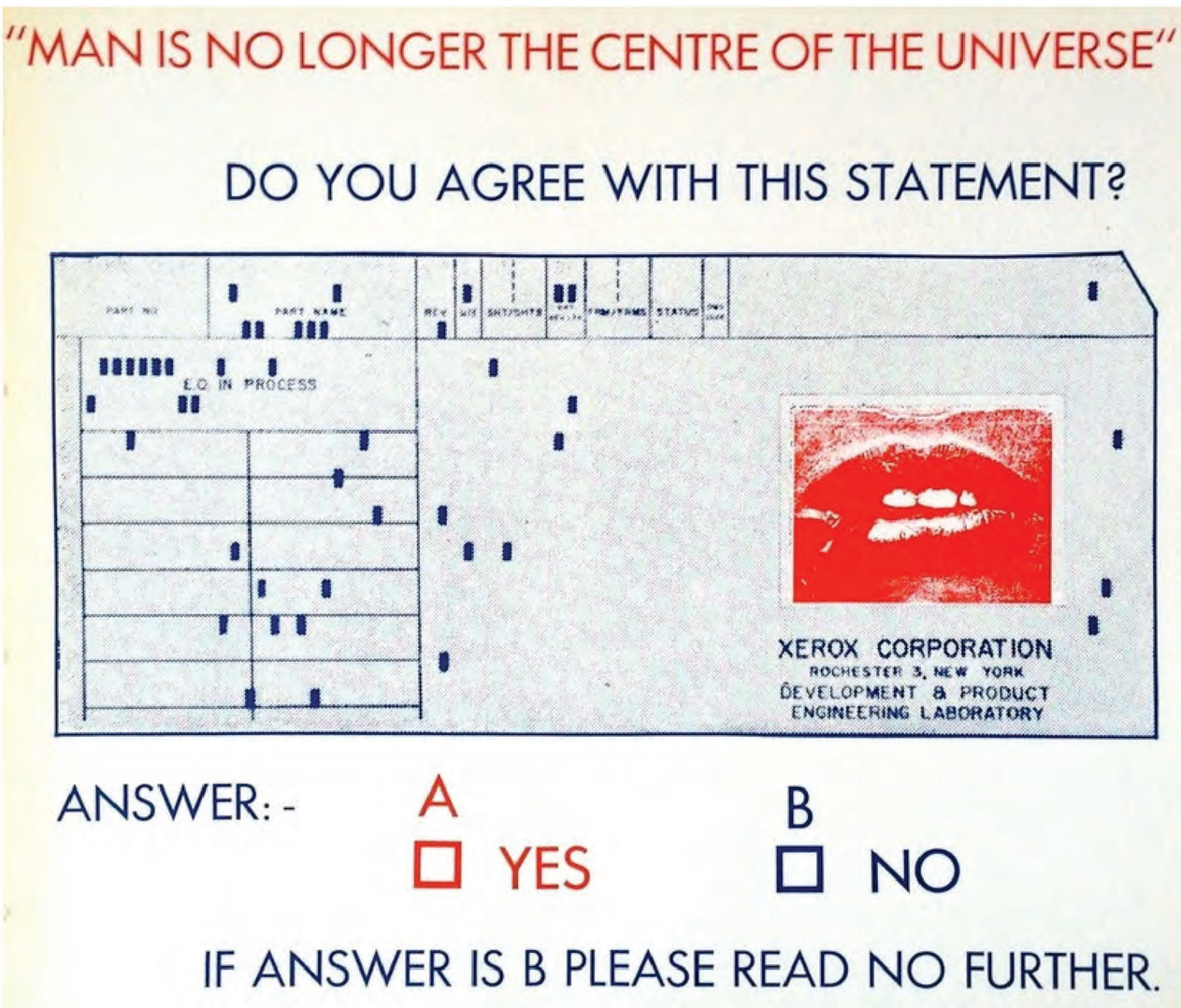
Alison Knowles, The Big Book, (1967)

Comprised of eight moveable pages —each four feet wide by eight feet tall —anchored to a metal spine, this walk-in construction was equipped with casters, which made it possible to leaf through individual pages. Each page had access to the next, opening up different spaces between them where a reader could spend some time.

Artists using cards, slips of paper, and other ephemera:

Joe Tilson: “Man is no longer...” (1968)

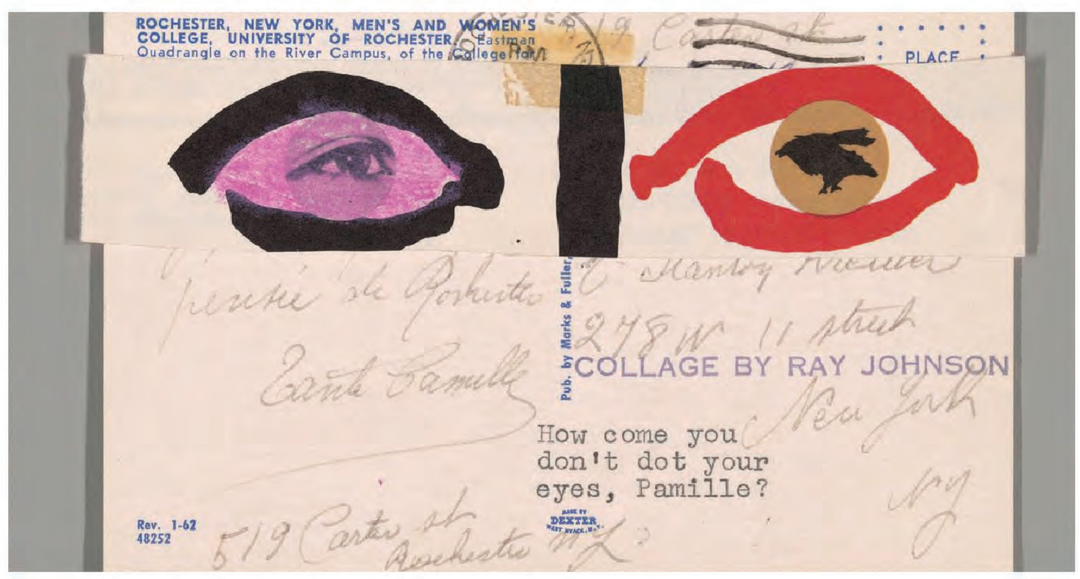
Screenprint on woven paper.



How is he using the symbol of the punch-card n this poster? This is one of his many Xerox prints, which seem to be critiquing new technologies for mass reproduction. He sometimes links the card and technology in general to a kind of sterility...

Tilson’s ‘Alchera’ series (1970-9) might also be useful to my inquiry: he seems to use lots of logical diagrams and printing methods to create compendiums...there’s a sense of volume, density.

Ray Johnson, "Bee Stings," 1973-94



Mail art in general is useful to my inuiry!

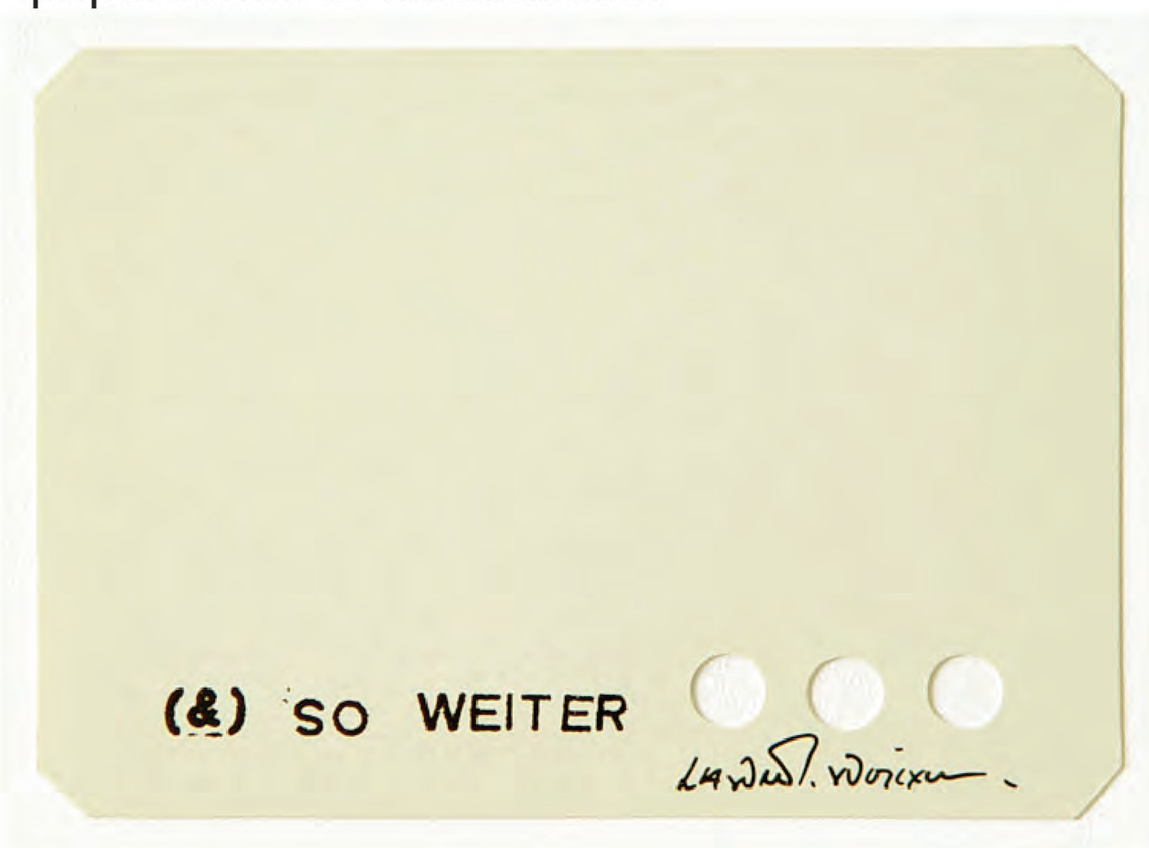
Johnson's experiments with art in the mail began in 1943, while the posting of instructions and soliciting of activity from his recipients began in the mid-1950s with the mailing of his "moticos", and thus provided mail art with a blueprint for the free exchange of art via post

Ray Johnson setting up a ‘Moticos’ installation in New York City, autumn 1955.

Lawrence Weiner: Bookmarks and Postcard, (1990)

Cut-out bookmark, 17,8 x 5,1 cm.
Beautifully constructed slips, I'm paying attention to the way he has perforated these works.

10,5 x 14,8
Die-cut postcard with punched holes: very relevant to my inquiry into the punch card and early paper forms of databases...



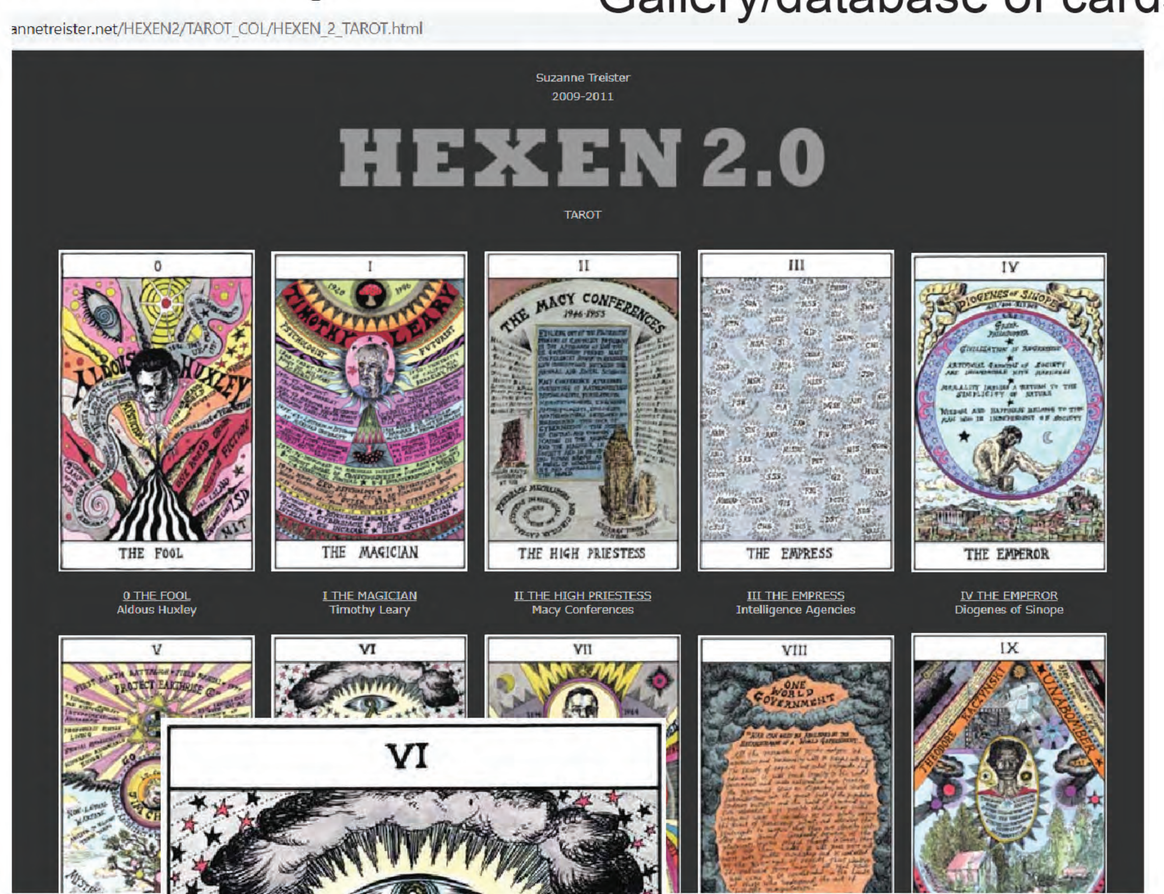
Suzanne Treister: HEXEN 2.0 (2009-2011)

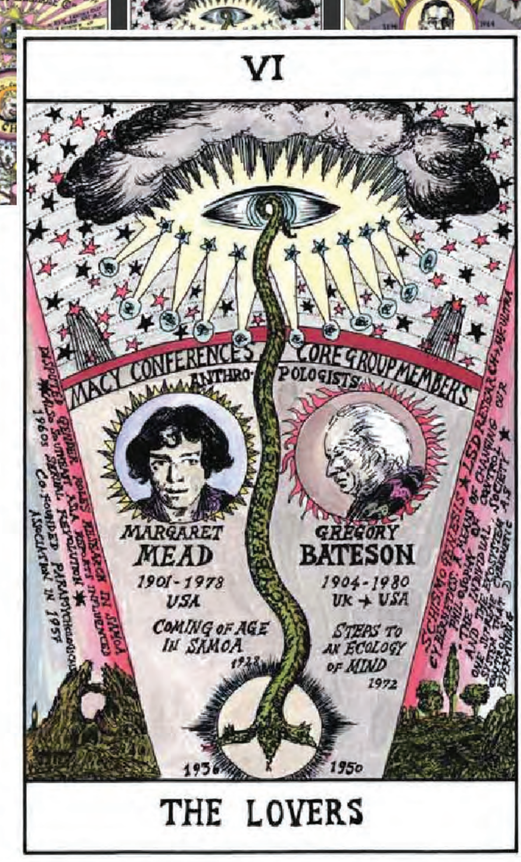
Gallery/database of cards.

"HEXEN 2.0 looks into histories of scientific research behind government programmes of mass control, investigating parallel histories of countercultural and grass roots movements. HEXEN 2.0 charts, within a framework of post-WWII U.S. governmental and military imperatives, the coming together of scientific and social sciences through the development of cybernetics, the history of the internet, the rise of Web 2.0 and increased intelligence gathering, and implications for the future of new systems of societal manipulation towards a control society.

Based on actual events, people, histories and scientific projections of the future, and consisting of alchemical diagrams, a Tarot deck, photo-text works, a video and a website, HEXEN 2.0 offers a space where one may use the works as a tool to envision possible alternative futures."

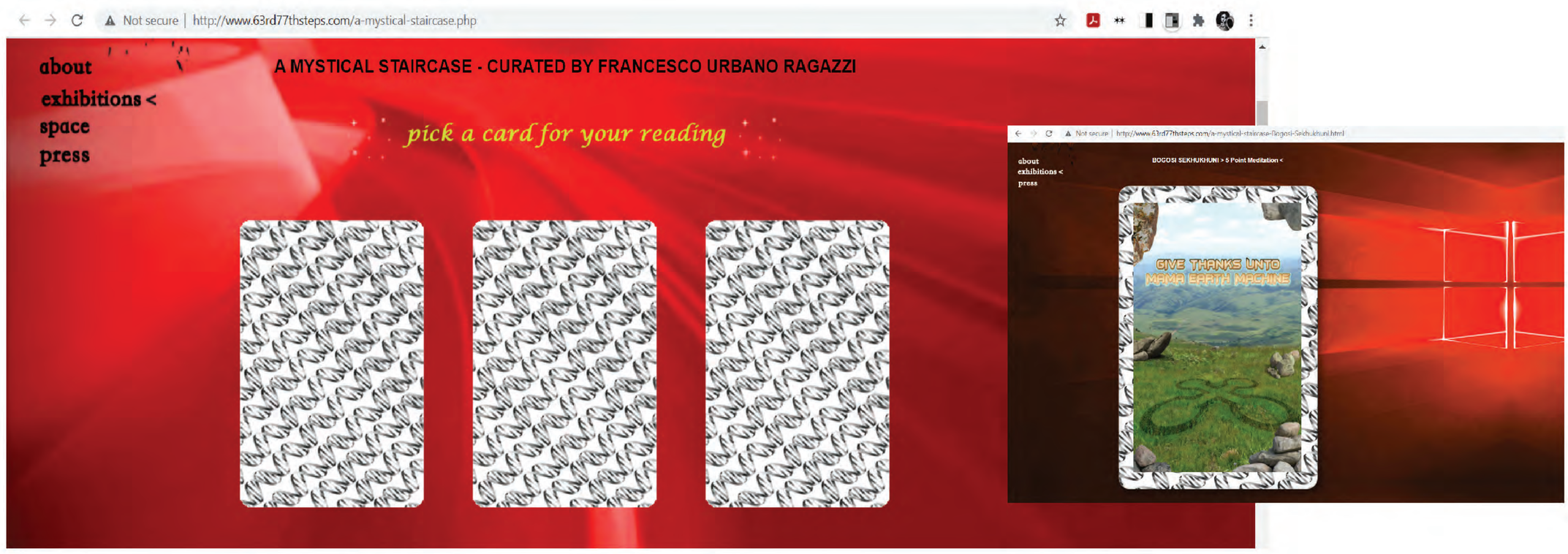
>the whole project now lives online: each card is uploaded. Uses the web as a space to explore hypothetical ideas.



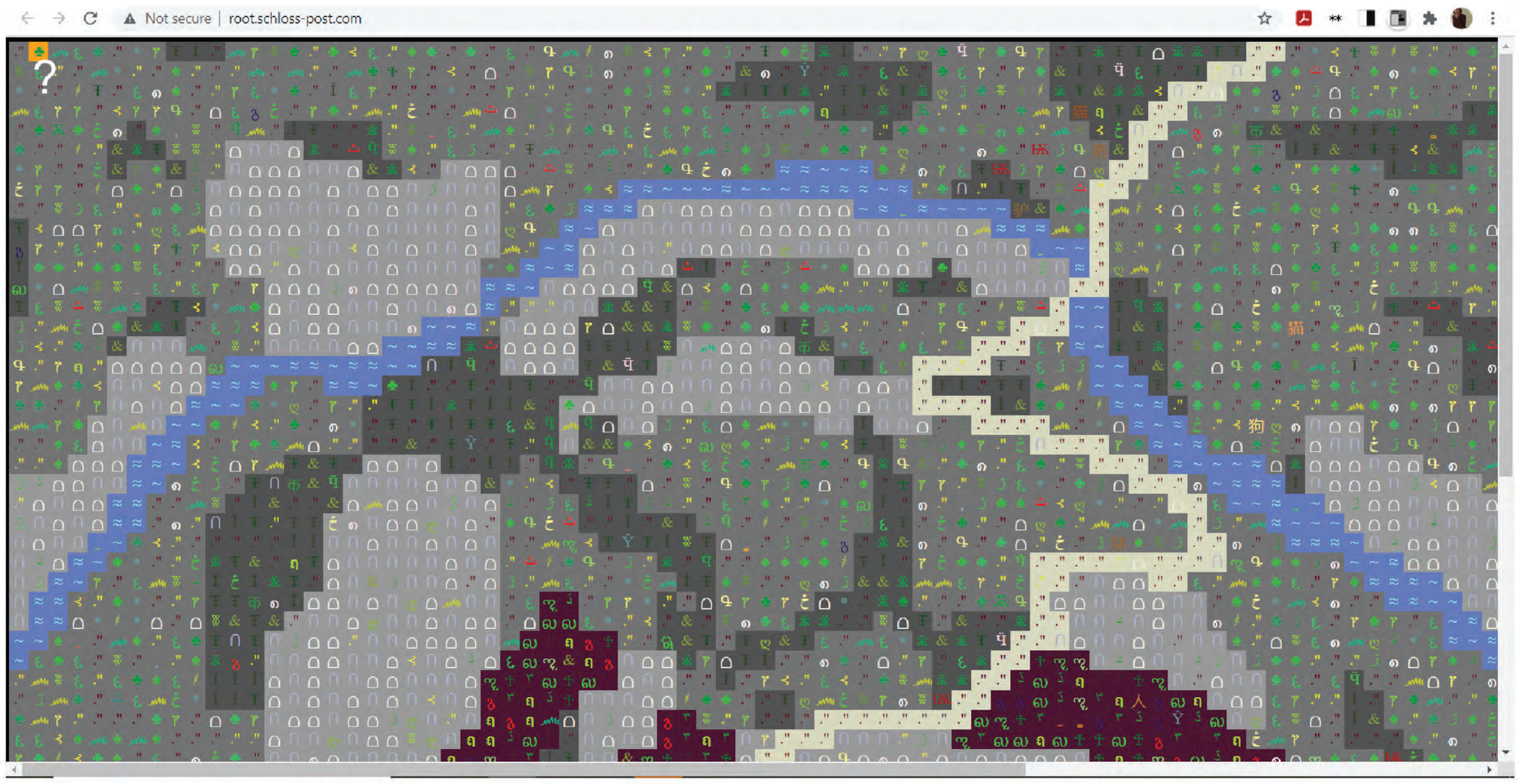


A digitised card!

(Net) Artists using websites as medium:



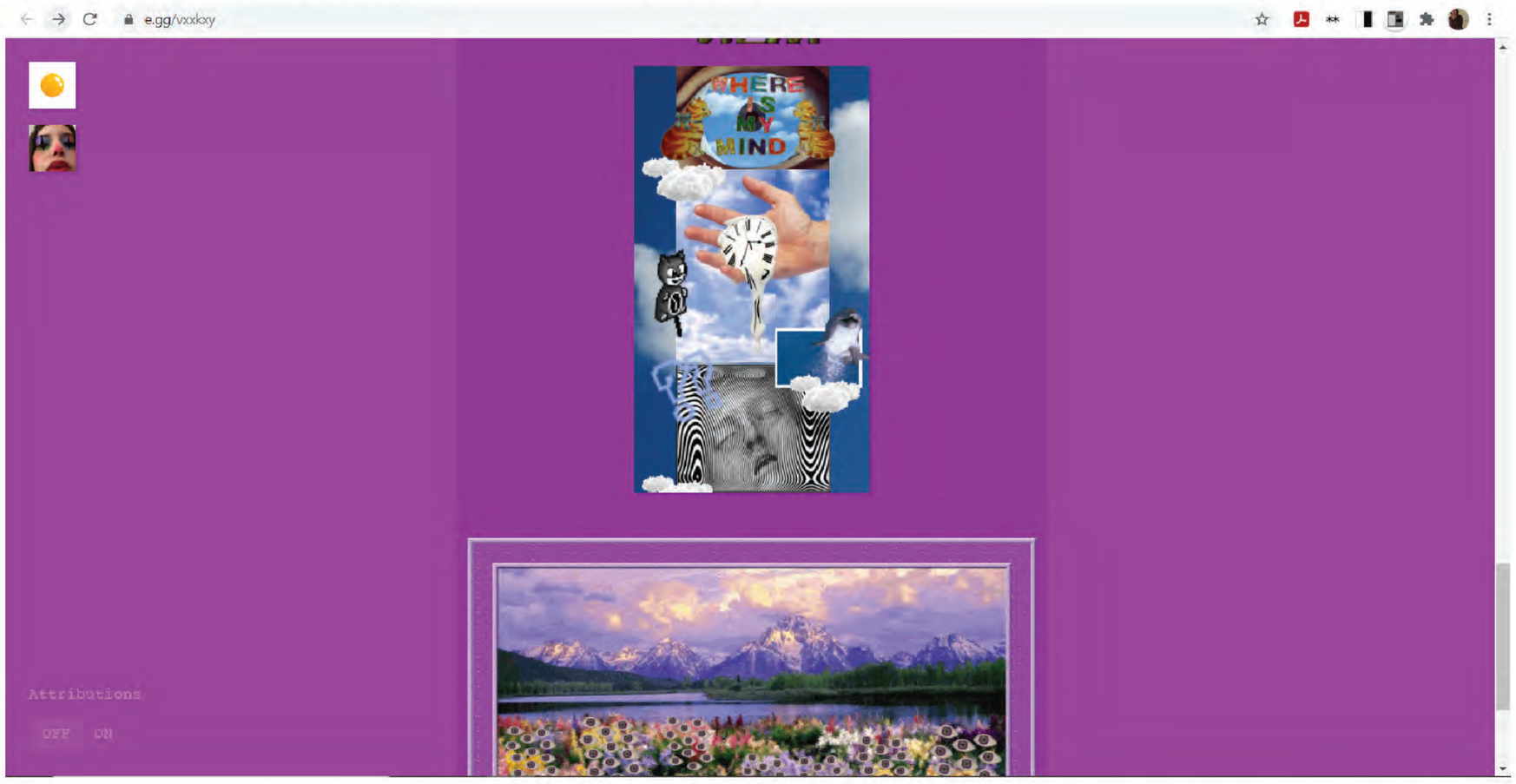
'A Mystical Staircase': Brilliant digital Tarot deck which allows viewers to chose cards and read then in separate pages. Very immersive and distinctive pages, cards are intricately designed.



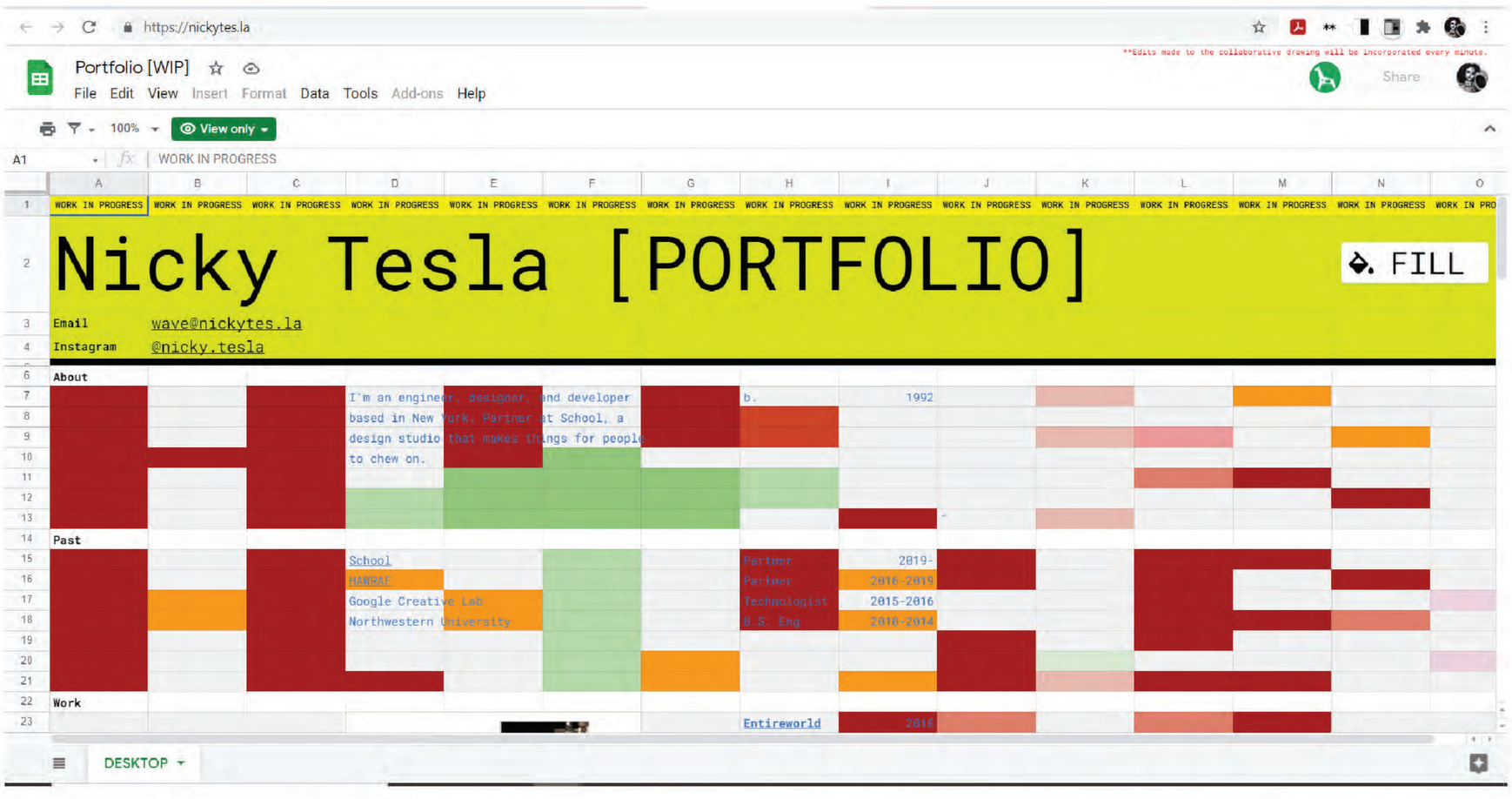
'Root-Schloss Map': A collective Garden made up of smaller insignia and icons- a viewer navigates by clicking symbols and reading small snippets of poetic text. A great way of synthesising place with digital mapping without being too technical.

Gerrit Reitveld Academie's Lecture page shows computer-processed landscapes in flux: text dances across the top and bottom of the pages. I really liked the colour palette and the attention to different layers and pages: tried to mimin their navigation style in my final outcomes.

‘Pointcloud Garden’: digital scans on New York’s botanical garden materialise on the screen as the viewer watches the points form. The code fuses some of Mandelbrot’s fractals with early 2000s net aesthetics. There’s a slow, quite poetic sense of something growing across the pages, in real time.

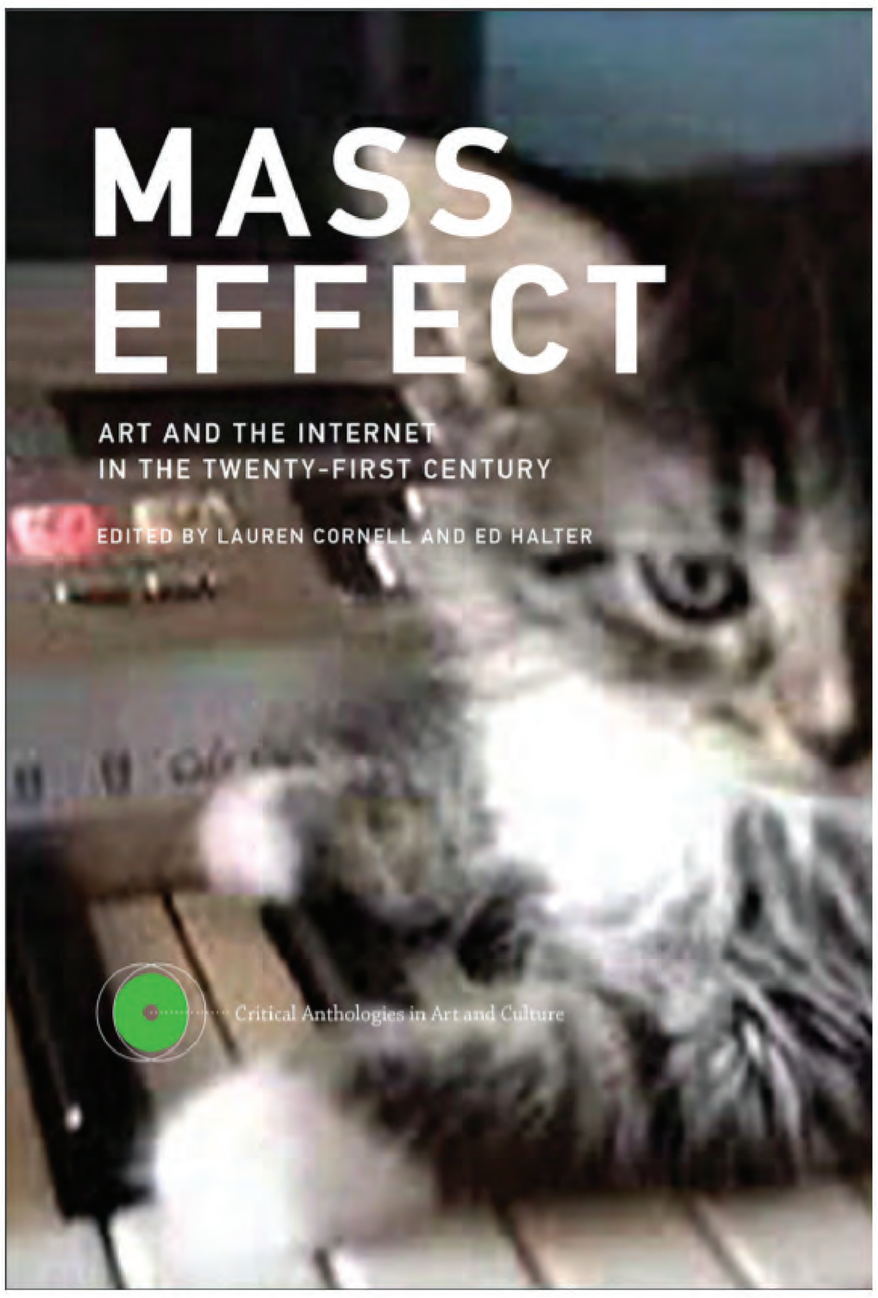


‘E.gg’: slow stack of esoteric images. When the image reaches the top of the page, audio and video is triggered (some quite complex javascript in there!). Made in 2011: quite advanced for the time.

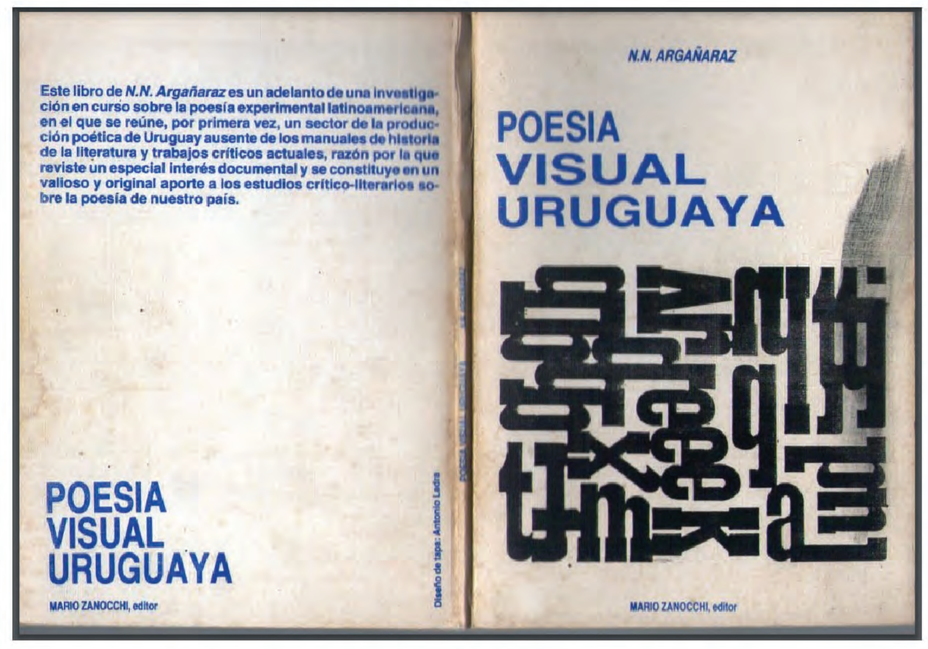


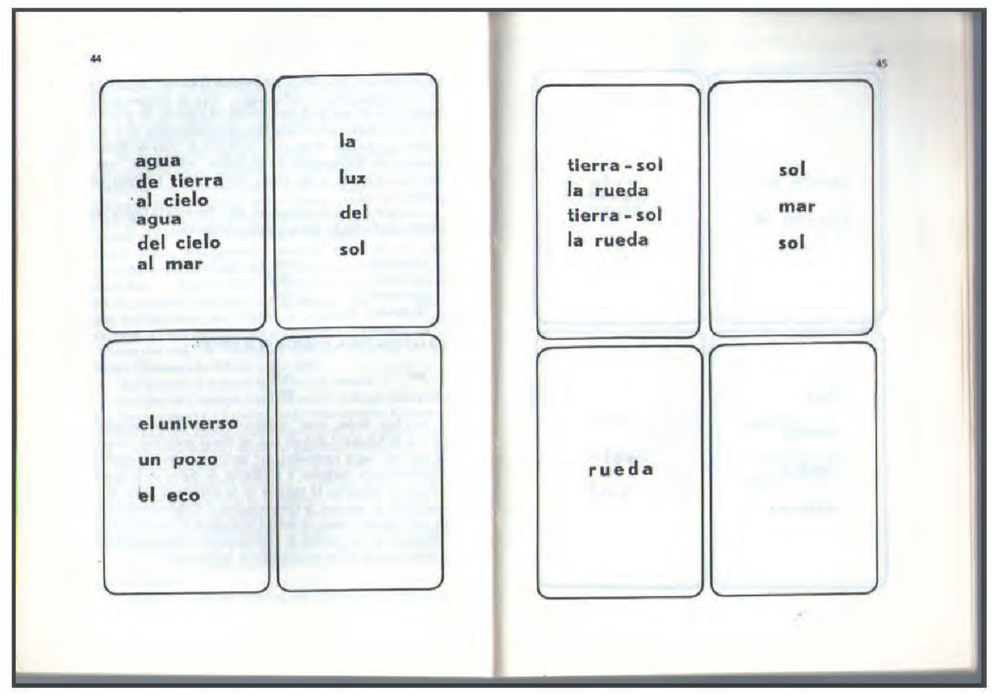
Nicky Tesla’s 2020 design portfolio takes the form of an open-source ‘Google Sheets’ document- quite a novel way of displaying information. This was the first use of the software I have seen, and it was quite instructional to my work making catalogues.

Books Consulted:

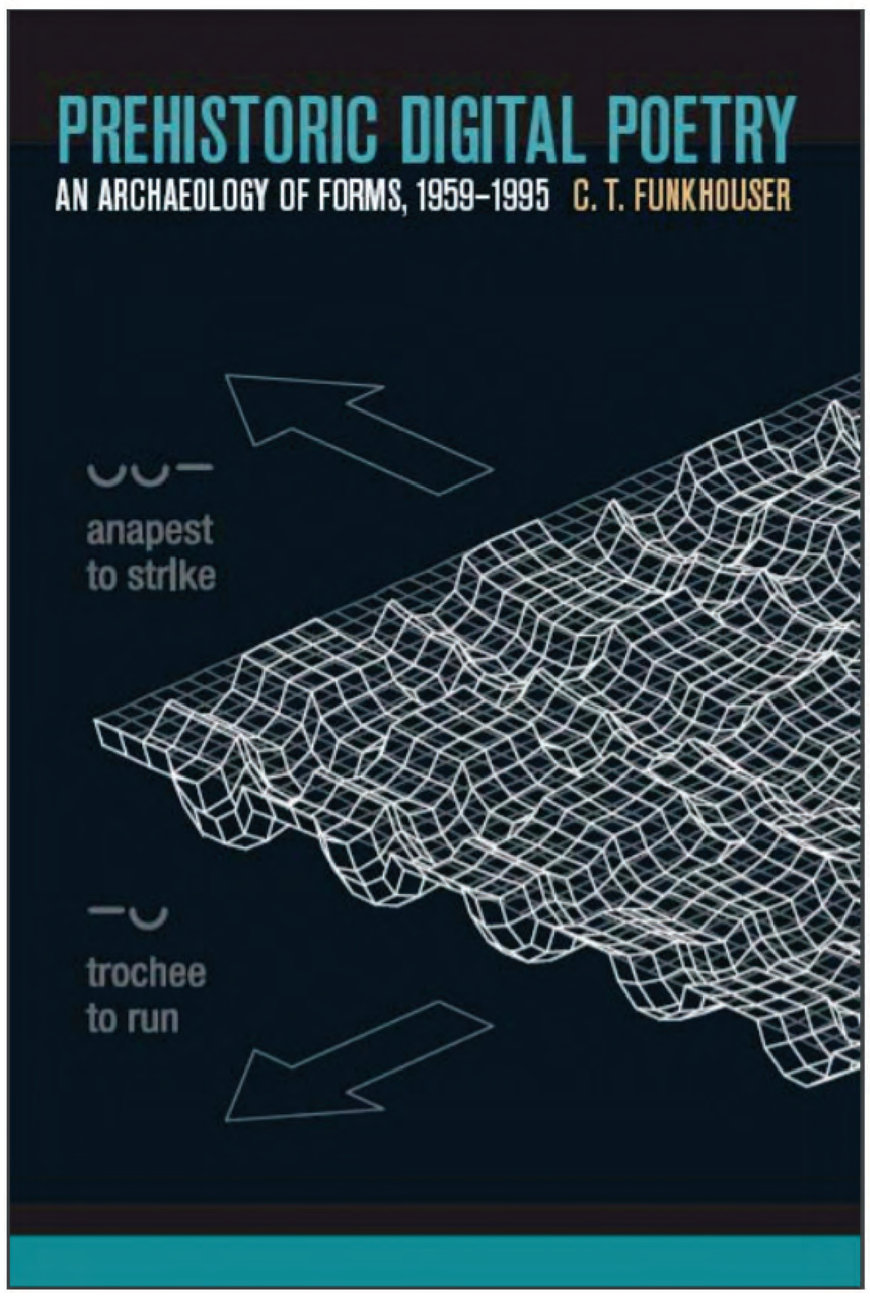


Among the topics examined are the use of commercial platforms for art practice, what art means in an age of increasing surveillance, and questions surrounding such recent concepts as "postinternet."



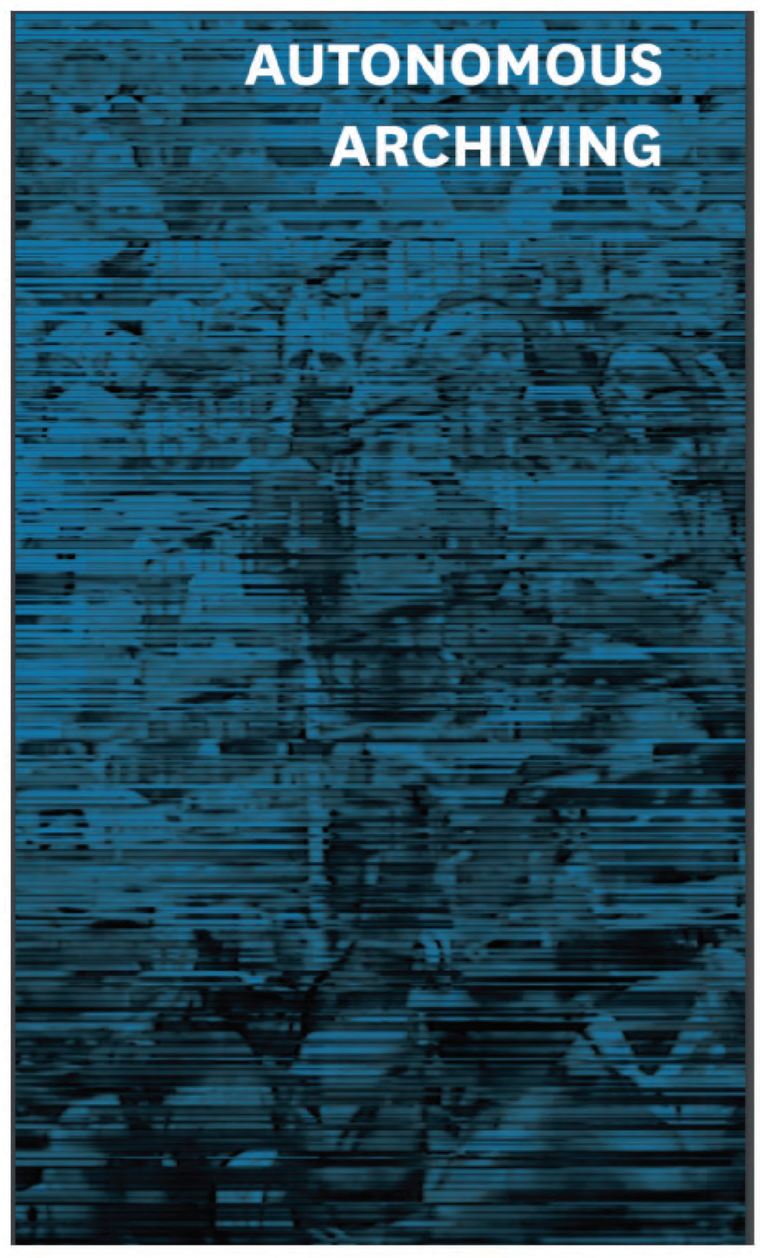


Uruguayan visual poetry: great resource. Lovely monograph of works from 1986 onwards.

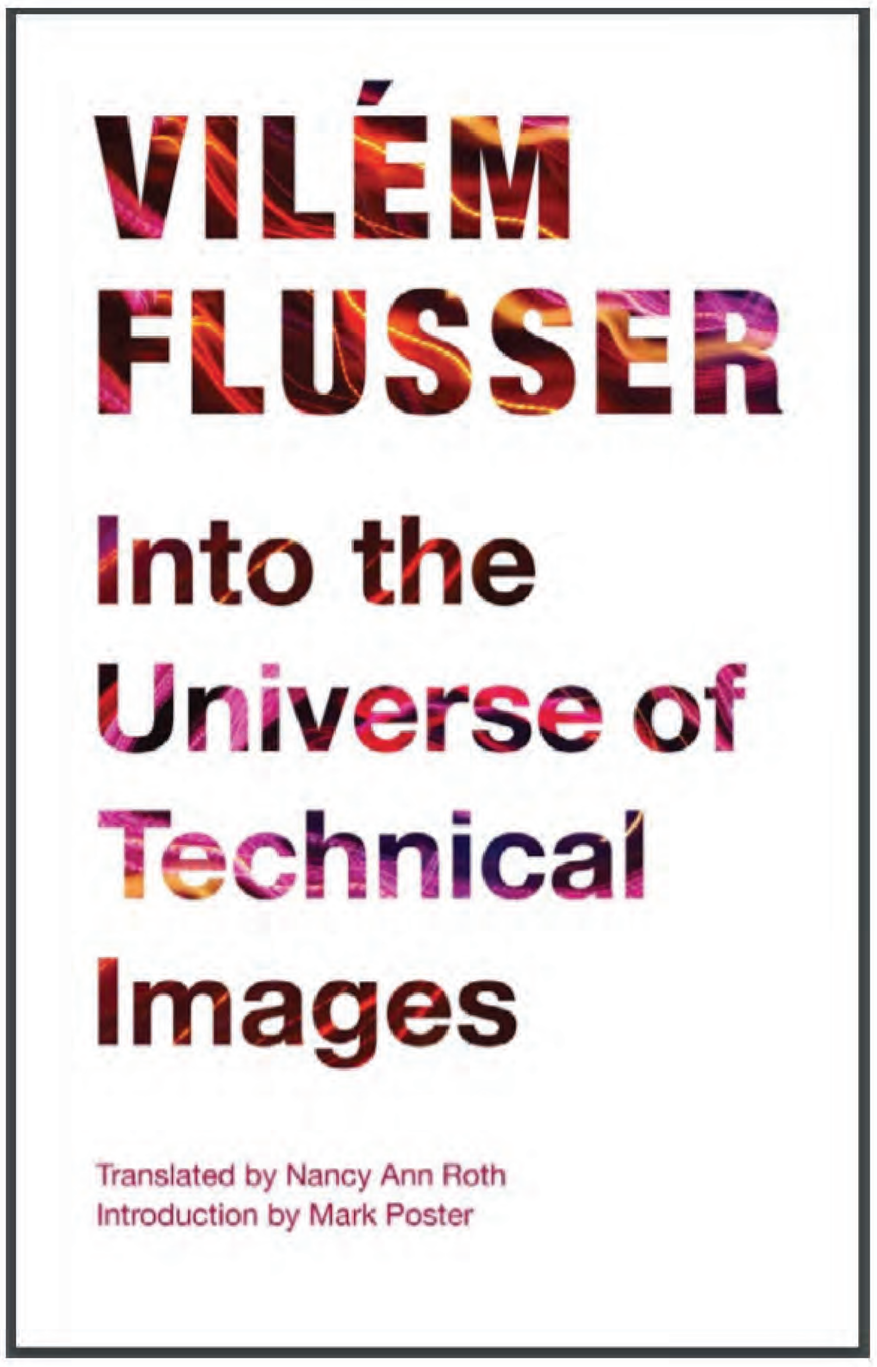


"The artist's job is to compose, to place together in a meaningful arrangement a number of independent elements" ...

This book identifies what works of digital poetry are in their broadest sense: arrangements of self-regulating (sometimes user-regulated) elements.(p.58)



"Artıkişler Collective established "bak.ma", a practice of video archiving focused on social and political movements in Turkey. This book not only aims to contain videos of the Gezi Park upheaval but also several other videograms that were stored in hidden parts of computers by media activists. Artıkişler Collective aims to discuss archiving practices and urban movements,visual data collection, the "possible montage of revolution" in a metaphoric sense."

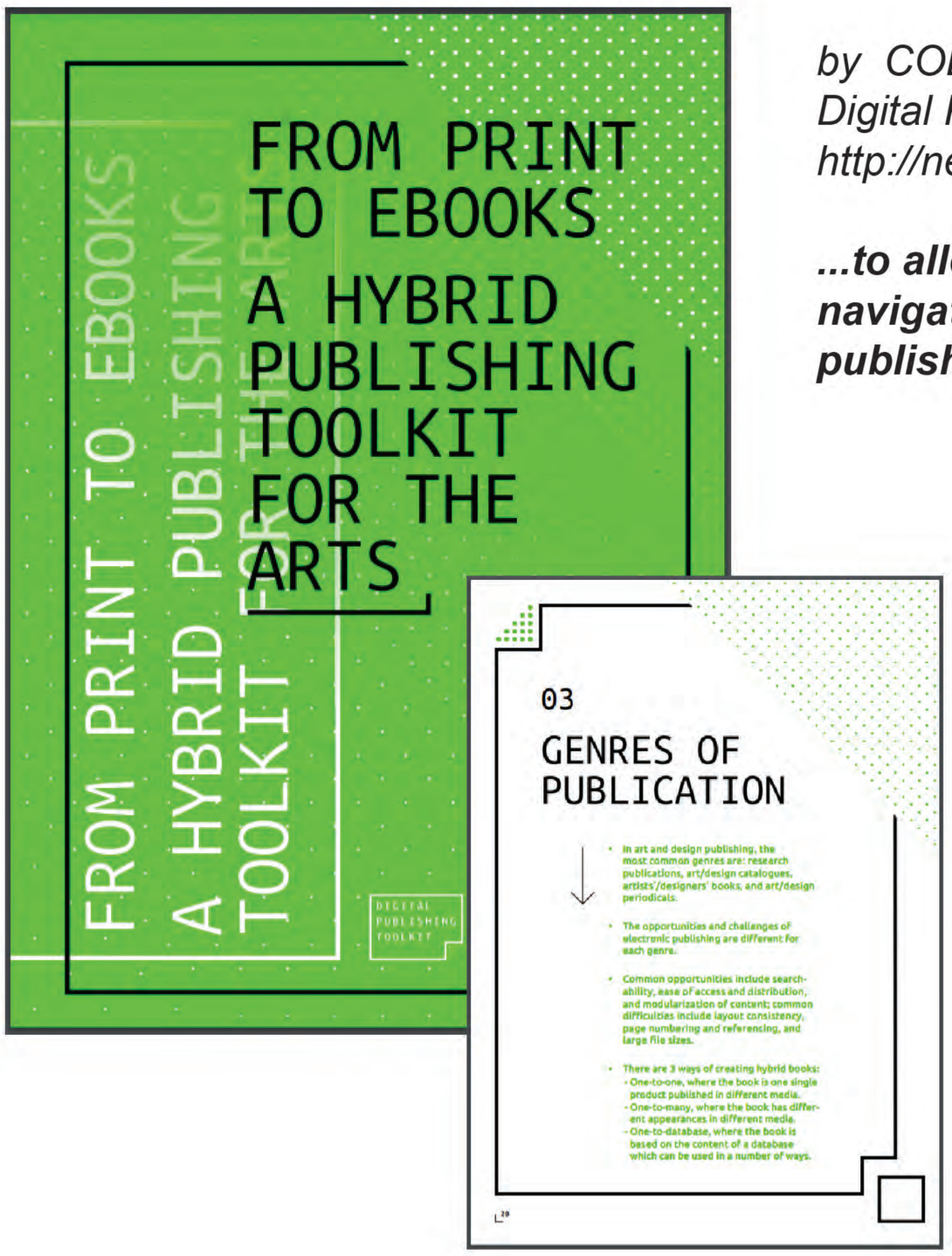


That is what is at once ghostly and enticing about envisioning with keys: technical images are phantoms that can give the world, and us, meaning.

A closer look at technical images shows that they are not images at all but rather symptoms of chemical or electronic processes.

>This book discusses the complexities of images produced for non-visual purposes (relevant to my interest in placeholders).

Also discusses how to find meaning in work which is accessed through various disembodied 'ports' and 'keys' (ie. through a laptop), which has changed the way I view making digitally-based pieces: Flusser is positive about the abstraction of the process of viewing, linking it a bit to abstraction and dreams. It's informative to see a positive interpretation of this- a 'positive alienation' in Fisher's sense.



by COLOPHON
Digital Publishing Toolkit,
http://networkcultures.org/digitalpublishing/toolkit.

...to allow publishers active in the art and culture sector to navigate the diverse and complex landscape of digital publishing in a more informed way.

>helpful technical guide to bookmaking, oline data storage, archive-making etc.

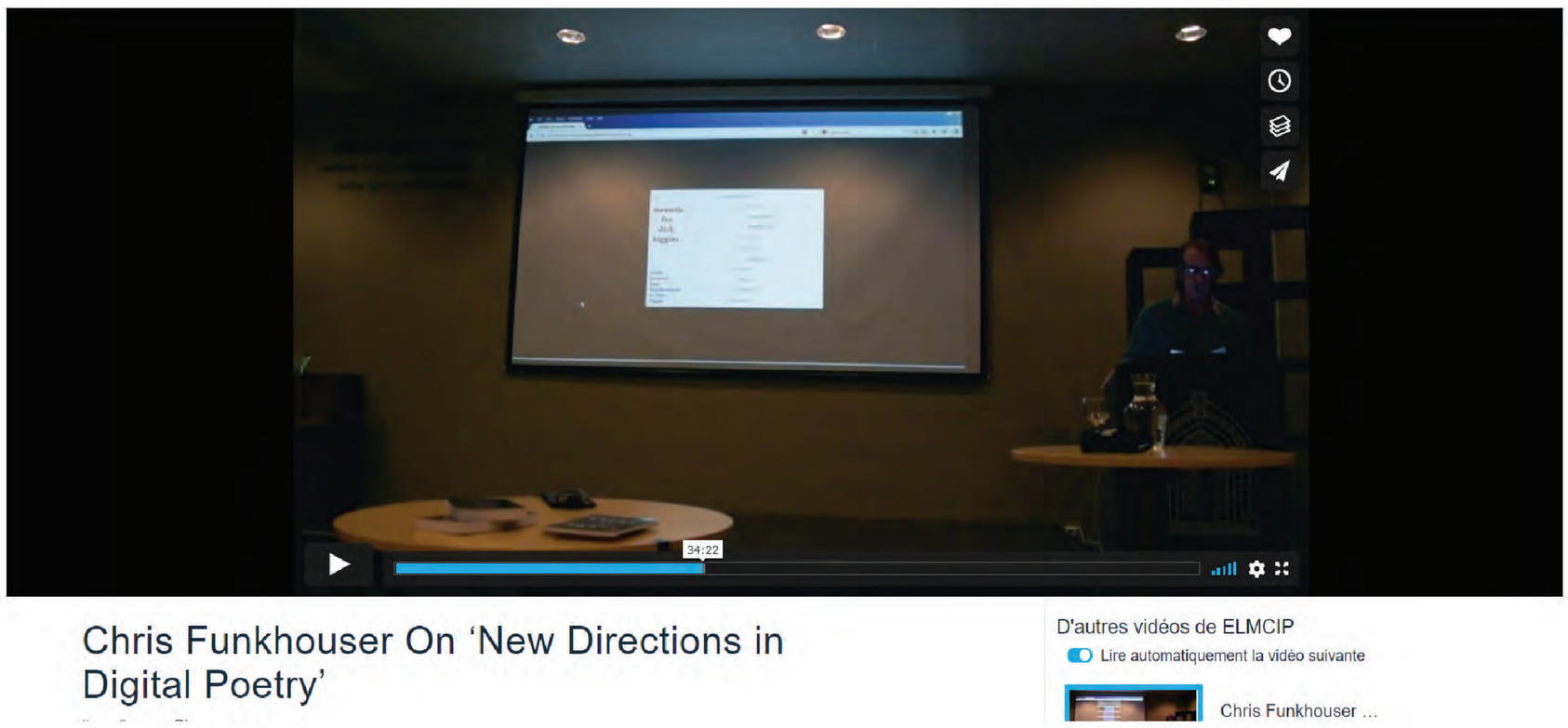
PIRATE PLATFORMS:
THE PIRATE BAY, LIBRARY.RU, AAAAARG, MONOSKOP

As with music and films, 'pirate' platforms haven often been at the avant-garde of electronic publishing. They provide music, films, games and electronic books as free downloads – either in outright violation of copyrights, or in legal 'gray zones' (obscure and out-of-print books, films or recordings of which the rights owners are unknown). The mere existence and popularity of pirate sites for digitized books is in itself an indication of the actual size of the market for electronic reading. Pirate platforms are, by their nature, more volatile than online bookstores and e-reading platforms. Worldwide there are various organizations dedicated to fighting piracy and shutting down pirate websites, even small-scale ones. However pirate platforms have usually proven quite resilient to such crackdown attempts by copyright enforcers, often reincarnating on a different web domain shortly after a forced closure.

Seminars and Lectures:

Chris Funkhouser's talk “On 'New Directions in Digital Poetry'” on October 14, 2014 at the Bergen Public Library.
Organized by BEL and the Bergen Public Library as part of the Fall 2014 Digital Arena Electronic Reading Series.

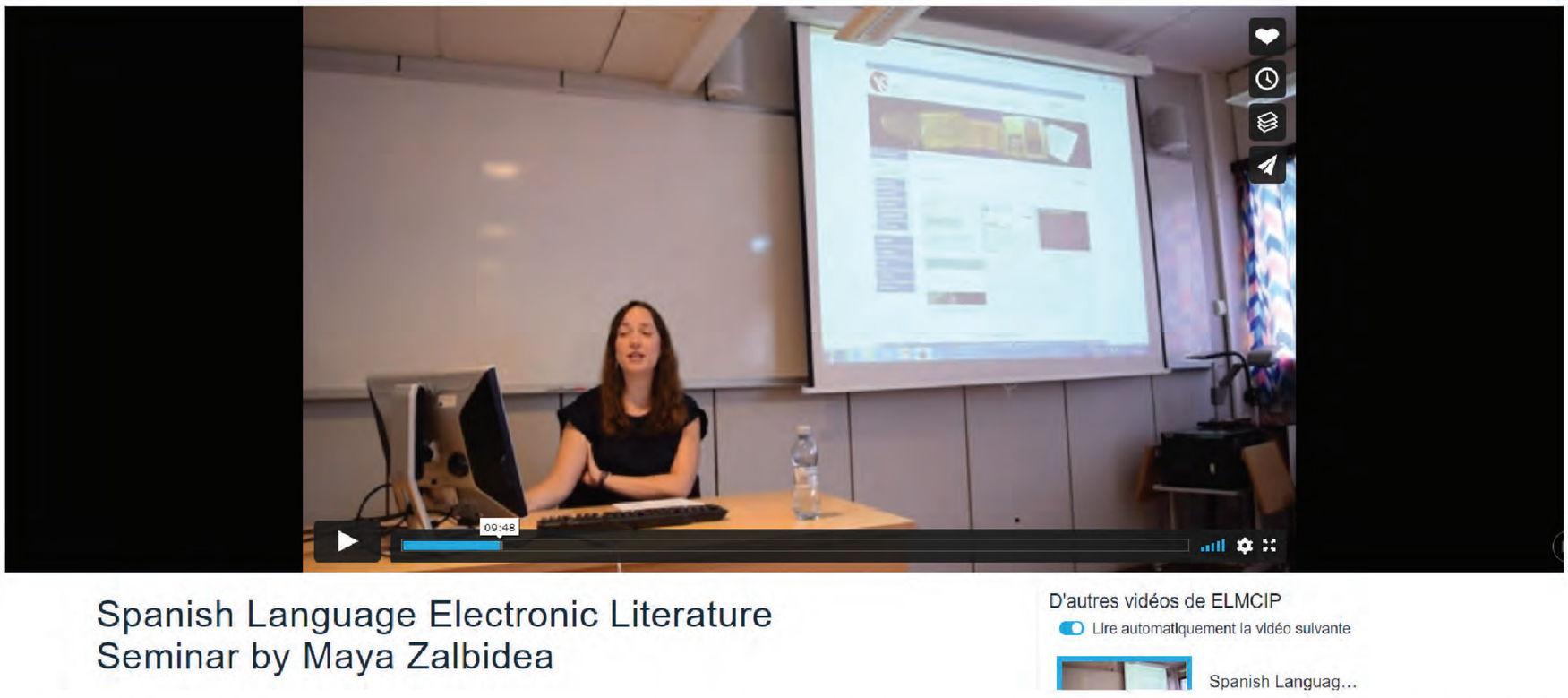
(available here: https://vimeo.com/109386785)



digital technology is synthetic in essence and brittle in terms of longevity

Thesis: plasticity is the foundation of digital poetry.

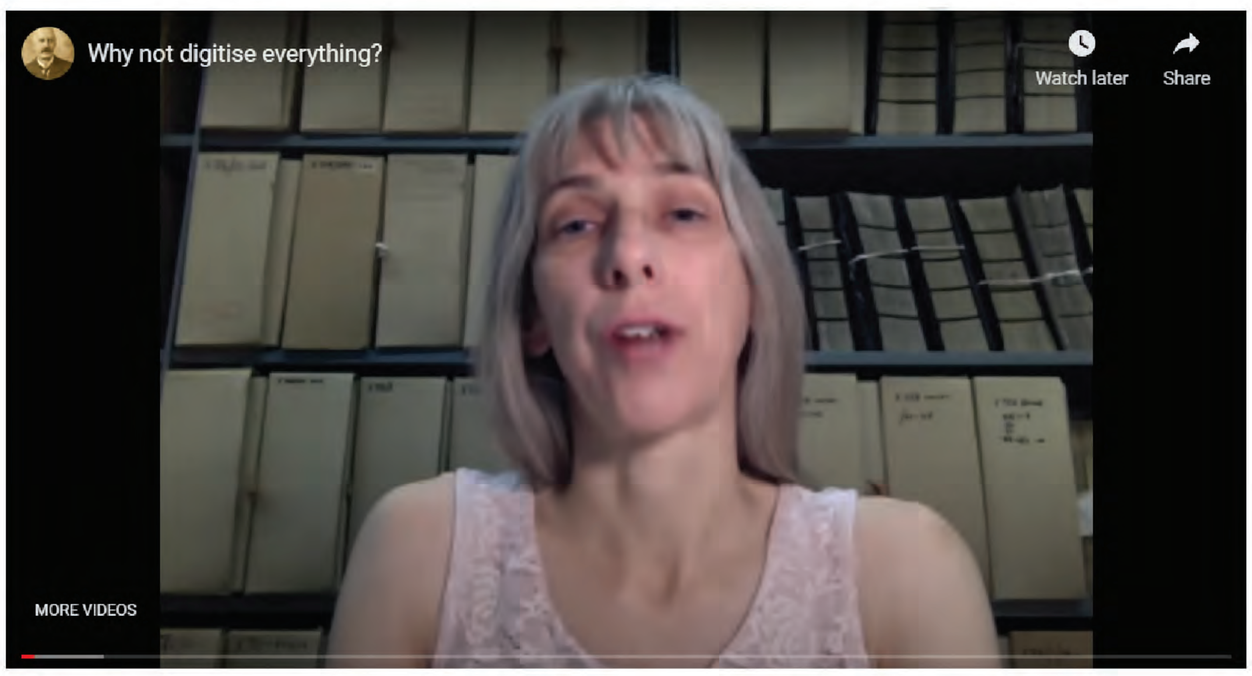
...digital poetry is primarily about changing the ports of reception of work.



The UiB Electronic Literature Research Group is pleased to welcome SPIRE guest researcher Maya Zalbidea (Ces Don Bosco University Madrid).

(available here: https://vimeo.com/104492427)

Why Not Digitise Everything?

“A brief answer to the question this archivist dreads.”

This presentation by our Service Manager was recorded as an assignment for a FutureLearn course by the Open University.