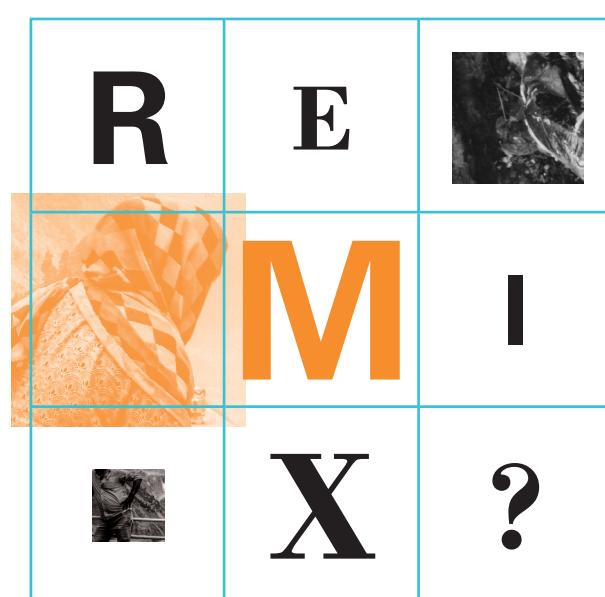


WHAT COMES AFTER







What Comes After Remix?

Lev Manovich

It is a truism today that we live in a “remix culture.” Many cultural and lifestyle arenas — music, fashion, design, art, web applications, usercreated media, food — are governed by remixes, fusions, collages, or mash-ups. If post-modernism defined 1980s, remix definitely dominates 2000s, and it will probably continue to rule the next decade as well. (For an expanding resource on remix culture, visit remixtheory.net by Eduardo Navas.)

Here are just a few examples of how remix continues to expand. In his 2004/2005 winter collection, John Galliano (a fashion designer for the house of Dior) mixed vagabond look, Yemenite traditions, East-European motifs, and other sources that he collects during his extensive travels around the world. DJ Spooky created a featurelength remix of D.W. Griffith’s 1912 “Birth of a Nation” which he appropriately named “Rebirth of a Nation.” In April 2006, Annenberg Center at University of Southern California ran a two-day conference on “Networked Politics” which had sessions and presentations on a variety of remix cultures on the Web: political remix videos, anime music videos, machinima, alternative news, infrastructure hacks.¹

In addition to these cultures that remix media content, we also have a growing number of software applications that remix data — so called software “mash-ups.” Wikipedia defines a mash-up as “a website or application that combines content from more than one source into an

integrated experience.”² At the moment of this writing (February 4, 2007), the web site www.programmableweb.com listed a total of 1,511 mash-ups, and it estimated that an average of 3 new mash-up Web applications are being published every day.³

Remix practice extends beyond culture and Internet. Wired magazine devoted its July 2005 issue to the theme of Remix Planet. The introduction boldly stated: “From Kill Bill to Gorillaz, from custom Nikes to Pimp My Ride, this is the age of the remix.”⁴ Another top IT trend watcher in the world — the annual O’Reilly Emerging Technology conferences (ETECH) — similarly adopted remix as the theme for its 2005 conference. Attending the conference, I watched in amazement how top executives from Microsoft, Yahoo, Amazon, and other IT companies not precisely known for their avantgarde aspirations, described their recent technologies and research projects using the concept of remixing. If I had any doubts that we are living not simply in Remix Culture but in a Remix Era, they disappeared right at that conference.

Remixing originally had a precise and a narrow meaning that gradually became diffused. Although precedents of remixing can be found earlier, it was the introduction of multi-track mixers that made remixing a standard practice. With each element of a song — vocals, drums, etc. — available for separate manipulation, it became possible to “re-mix” the song: change the volume of some tracks or substitute new tracks for old ones. Gradually the term became more and more broad, today referring to any reworking of already existing cultural work(s).

In his book DJ Culture Ulf Poschardt singles out different stages in the evolution of remixing practice. In 1972 DJ Tom Moulton made his first disco remixes; as Poschardt points out, they “show a very chaste treatment of the original song. Moulton sought above all a different weighting of the various soundtracks, and worked the rhythmic elements of the disco songs even more clearly and powerfully... Moulton used the various elements of the sixteen or twenty-four track master tapes and remixed them.”⁵ By 1987, “DJs started to ask other DJs for remixes” and the treatment of the original material became

I disagree in some way with the highlighted text.

much more aggressive. For example, "Coldcut used the vocals from Ofra Haza's 'Im Nin'alu' and contrasted Rakim's ultradeep bass voice with her provocatively feminine voice. To this were added techno sounds and a house-inspired remix of a rhythm section that loosened the heavy, sliding beat of the rap piece, making it sound lighter and brighter."⁶

Around the turn of the century (20th to 21st) people started to apply the term "remix" to other media besides music: visual projects, software, literary texts. Since, in my view, electronic music and software serve as the two key reservoirs of new metaphors for the rest of culture today, this expansion of the term is inevitable; one can only wonder why it did not happen earlier. Yet we are left with an interesting paradox: while in the realm of commercial music remixing is officially accepted,⁷ in other cultural areas it is seen as violating the copyright and therefore as stealing. So while filmmakers, visual artists, photographers, architects and Web designers routinely remix already existing works, this is not openly admitted, and no proper terms equivalent to remixing in music exist to describe these practices.

One term that is sometimes used to talk about these practices in nonmusic areas is "appropriation." The term was first used to refer to certain New York-based post-modern artists of the early 1980s who re-worked older photographic images – Sherrie Levine, Richard Prince, Barbara Kruger, and some others. But the term "appropriation" never achieved the same wide use as "remixing." In fact, in contrast to "remix," "appropriation" never completely left its original art world context where it was coined. I think that "remixing" is a better term anyway because it suggests a systematic re-working of a source, the meaning which "appropriation" does not have. And indeed, the original "appropriation artists" such as Richard Prince simply copied the existing image as a whole rather than re-mixing it. As in the case of Duchamp's famous urinal, the aesthetic effect here is the result of a transfer of a cultural sign from one sphere to another, rather than any modification of a sign.

The other older term commonly used across media is "quoting" but I see it as describing a very different logic than remixing. If remixing implies systematically rearranging the whole text, quoting refers to inserting some fragments from old text(s) into the new one. Thus I think we should not see quoting as a historical precedent for remixing. Rather, we can think of it as a precedent for another new practice of authorship practice that, like remixing, was made possible by electronic and digital technology – sampling.

Music critic Andrew Goodwin defined sampling as "the uninhibited use of digital sound recording as a central element of composition. Sampling thus becomes an aesthetic programme."⁸ We can say that with sampling technology, the practices of montage and collage

R E M I X If post-modernism defined 1980s, ... dominates 2000s, and it will probably continue to rule the next decade as well.

that were always central to twentieth century culture, became industrialized. Yet we should be careful in applying the old terms to new technologically driven cultural practices. The terms "montage" and "collage" regularly pop up in the writings of music theorists from Poschardt to Kodwo Eshun and DJ Spooky who in 2004 published a brilliant book, Rhythm Science, which ended up on a number of "best 10 books of 2004" lists and which put forward "unlimited remix" as the artistic and political technique of our time.⁹

In my view, these terms that come to us from literary and visual modernism of the early twentieth century — think for instance of works by Moholy-Nagy, Hannah Höch or Raoul Hausmann — do not always adequately describe new electronic music. Let us note just three differences. Firstly, musical samples are often arranged in loops. Secondly, the nature of sound allows musicians to mix preexistent sounds in a variety of ways, from clearly differentiating

I disagree in some way with the highlighted text.

and contrasting individual samples (thus following the traditional modernist aesthetics of montage/collage), to mixing them into an organic and coherent whole.¹⁰ To use the terms of Roland Barthes, we can say that if modernist collage always involved a “clash” of element, electronic and software collage also allows for a “blend.”¹¹ Thirdly, the electronic musicians now often conceive their works beforehand as something that will be remixed, sampled, taken apart and modified.

It is relevant to note here that the revolution in electronic pop music that took place in the second part of the 1980s was paralleled by similar developments in pop visual culture. The introduction of electronic editing equipment such as switcher, keyer, paintbox, and image store made remixing and sampling a common practice in video production towards the end of the decade; first pioneered in music videos, it later took over the whole visual culture of TV. Other software tools such as Photoshop (1989) and After Effects (1993) had the same effect on the fields of graphic design, motion graphics, commercial illustration and photography. And, a few years later, the World Wide Web redefined an electronic document as a mix of other documents. Remix culture has arrived.

The question that at this point is really hard to answer is what comes after remix? Will we get eventually tired of cultural objects — be they dresses by Alexander McQueen, motion graphics by MK12 or songs by Aphex Twin — made from samples which come from an already existing database of culture? And if we do, will it be still psychologically possible to create a new aesthetic that does not rely on excessive sampling?

When I was emigrating from Russia to the U.S. in 1981, moving from grey and red communist Moscow to a vibrant and postmodern New York, I and others living in Russia felt that communist regime would last for at least another 300 years. But already ten years later, the Soviet Union ceased to exist. Similarly, in the middle of the 1990s the euphoria unleashed by the Web, the collapse of communist

governments in Eastern Europe and early effects of globalization created the impression that we have finally put Cold War culture behind us – its heavily armed borders, massive spying, and the military-industrial complex. And once again, only ten years later we seem to be back in the darkest years of Cold War, except that now we are being tracked with RFID chips, computer vision surveillance systems, data mining and other new technologies of the twenty-first century. So it is very possible that the remix culture, which right now appears to be so firmly in place that it cannot be challenged by any other cultural logic, will morph into something else sooner than we think.

I don't know what comes after remix. But if we try now to develop a better historical and theoretical understanding of the remix era, we will be in a better position to recognize and understand whatever new era will replace it. ■

¹ <http://netpublics.annenberg.edu/>, accessed February 4, 2007.

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mashup%28web_application_hybrid%29, accessed February 4, 2007.

³ <http://programableweb.com/mashups>, accessed February 4, 2007.

⁴ <http://wired.com/wired/archive/13.07/intro.html>, accessed February 4, 2007.

⁵ Ulf Poschardt, DJ Culture, trans. Shaun Whiteside (London: Quartet Books Ltd, 1998), 123.

⁶ Ibid, 280.

⁷ For instance, web users are invited to remix Madonna songs at <http://madonna.acidplanet.com/default.asp?subsection=madonna>.

⁸ Ibid, 280.

⁹ Paul D. Miller aka DJ Sppoky that Subliminal Kid. Rhythm Science. MIT Press, 2004.

¹⁰ To use the term of Roland Barthes's quote, we can say that if modernist collage always involved a “clash” of element, electronic and software collage also allows for “blend.”

¹¹ Roland Barthes, Image, Music, Text, translated by Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 146.

I disagree in some way with the highlighted text.



In Response... to Lev Manovich

This essay “attempts” to argue that remix culture has become a new era, goes into the history of music remixing, and discusses similar techniques used in other mediums. He then posits what might come after Remix, and asks if “we [will] get eventually tired of cultural objects... made from samples which come from an already existing database of culture.” My answer to that last point is “no,” because artists and cultures have been doing it for centuries, we just can’t see it as clearly because we’re looking it from a broader scope hundreds of years later.

“If post-modernism defined 1980s, remix definitely dominates 2000s.”

This feels like a bold statement to make in 2007 (when this was published), because before reading this article, I would never have thought of the 2000s as the “remix era.” I think that this “remix era” is less of an “era” and more of a buzzword that people jumped on to describe a new technology being used in a new way to do the same thing that artists have been doing for centuries. I think in hindsight, this idea of “remix” has become also so diluted that it no longer holds the definition that it might have in 2007. I wonder if the writer of this article could see the upcoming wave of “meme culture,” would he consider that the “next big era” or if he would just consider it the continuation of “remix”? Maybe even the “remix culture” is a just a new coat of paint that looked more exciting than it was from a person in 2007.

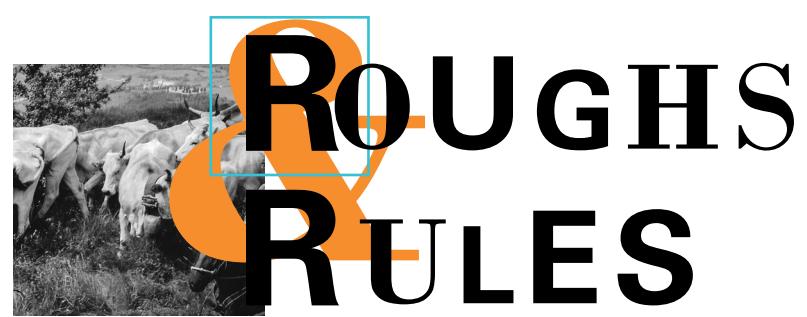
...or maybe we’re actually still in post-modernism. 🤷

The words I chose in response to the essay were:

**ANTICIPATED
&
PERSISTANT**

IMAGERY





ROUGH RULES

GRID A

This is the final set of rules for Grid A.

PLAY MINESWEEPER

Visit website and play a game with a 5x7 grid, with 8 mines. Once the game is over (lost or won), you will be using your board to create your final image.

PLACE IMAGES

On any mine that was properly flagged, place an image in grayscale (Fit to frame proportionally)

On any mine that exploded or was not found before the game ended, place an image in red (Fit to frame proportionally)

On all squares adjacent to the mine that caused the game to end, place a 50% image at the center of the square, behind the text, in red.

On all squares that were revealed that had no numbers, put a 50% Grayscale image in the center.

PLACE TEXT

Starting from the top left, moving right and down, on any numbered space, place a letter from the title and author in order, in Univers 65 at 72pt.

If the numbered space is 3 or higher, make the text Red and 80pt. If the numbered space is a 1, make the text 48pt and lowercase.

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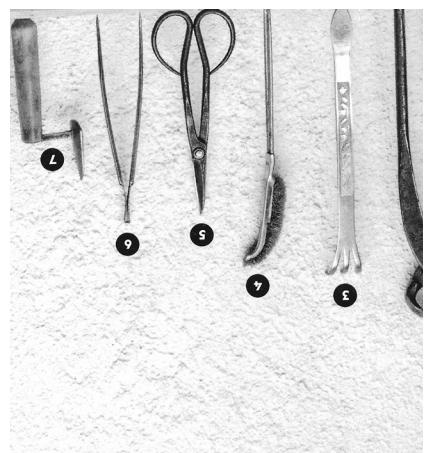
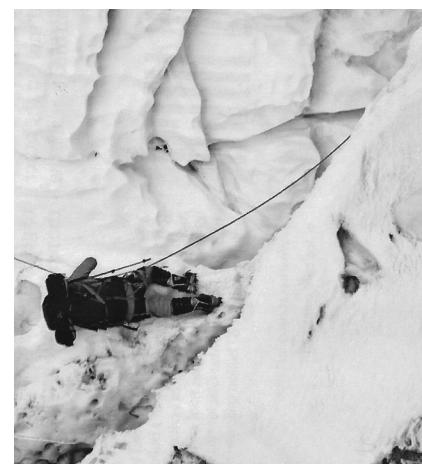
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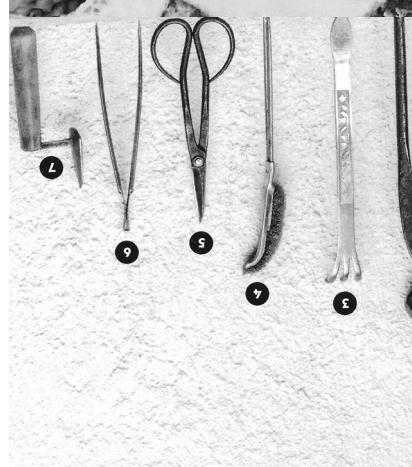
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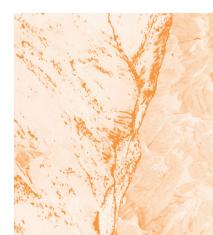


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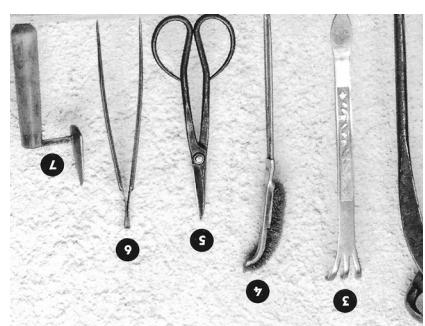


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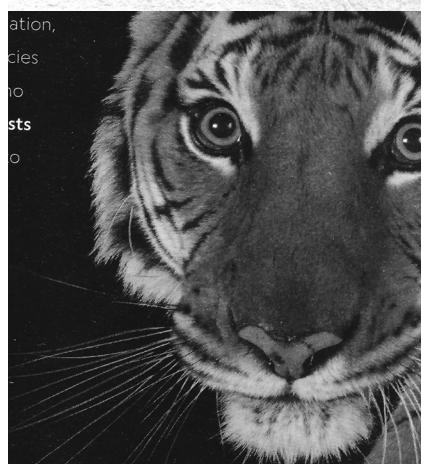
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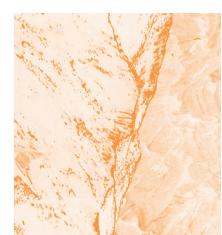
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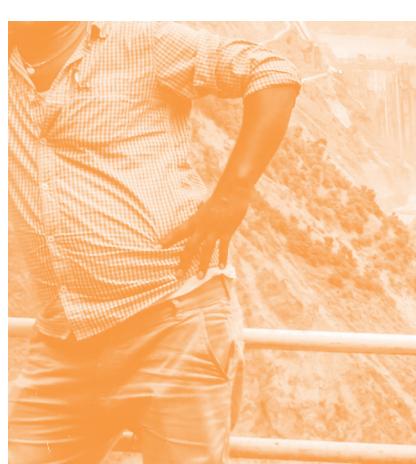


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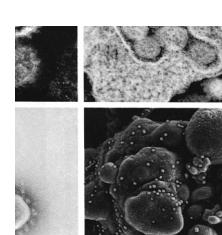


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ROUGH RULES

GRID B

This is the final set of rules for Grid B.

PLAY MINESWEEPER

Visit website and play a game with a 5x10 grid, with 12 mines. Once the game is over (lost or won), you will be using your board to create your final image.

PLACE IMAGES

On any mine that was properly flagged, place an image in grayscale (Fit to frame proportionally) at 150% size.

On any mine that exploded or was not found before the game ended, place an image in red (Fit to frame proportionally).

On the mine that exploded, the image should be made to be 200% in size.

On all squares adjacent to the mine that caused the game to end, place a 50% image at the center of the square, behind the text, in red.

On all squares that were revealed that had no numbers, put a 50% Grayscale image in the center. However, do not put an image in any “zero square” that is fully surrounded by other “zero squares”. Do not put an image on a “zero square” that is only adjacent to 1 squares.

On squares that are flagged or exposed mines that are more than 2 rows and columns away from the exploded mine, make them 75% scale. Flagged mines should be 100% if they are far away.

PLACE TEXT

Starting from the top left, moving right and down, on any numbered space, place a letter from the title and author in order, in Univers 65 at 72pt.

If the numbered space is 3 or higher, make the text Red and 88pt in 73 weight. If the numbered space is a 1, make the text 48pt and lowercase.

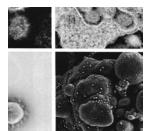
On the squares diagonal to all exploded mines add the next character from the title/author (cycle if you need to) in 48pt red uppercase, placed in the corner closest to the mine.



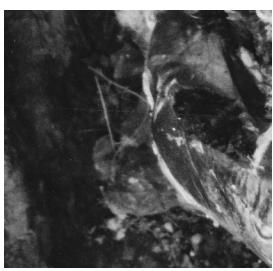
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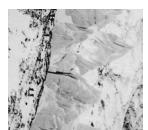
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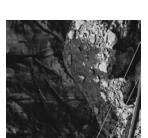
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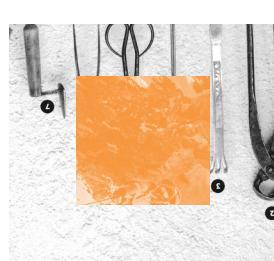


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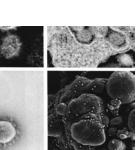


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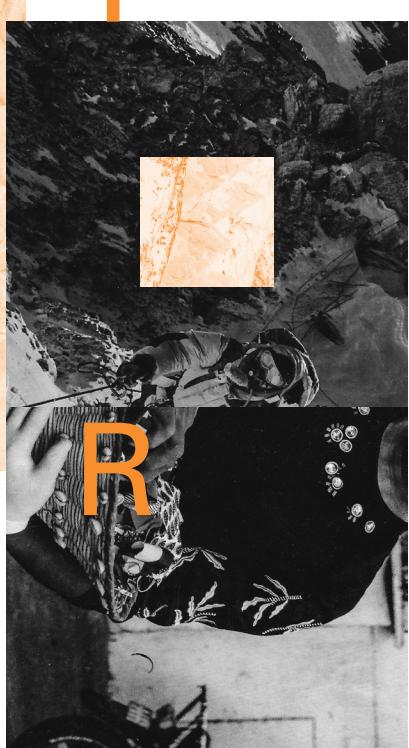
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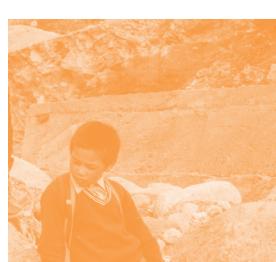
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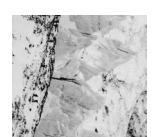
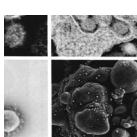
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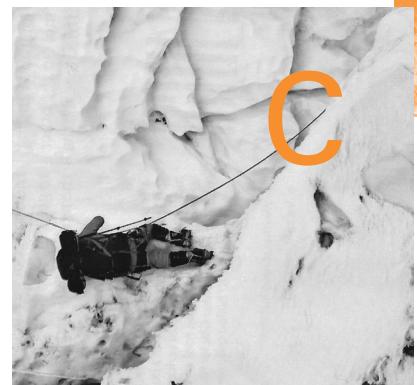


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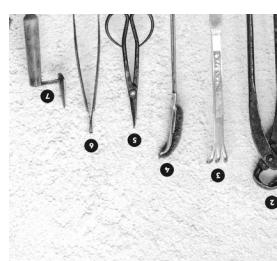
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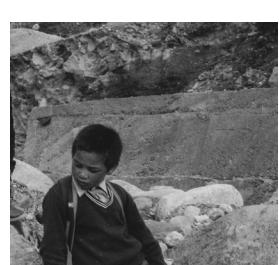
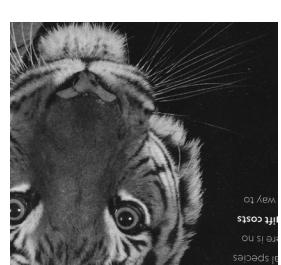
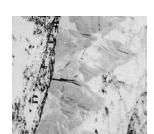
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ROUGH RULES

GRID C

This is the final set of rules for Grid C.

PLAY MINESWEEPER

Visit website and play a game with a 10x14 grid, with 25 mines. Once the game is over (lost or won), you will be using your board to create your final image.

PLACE IMAGES

On any mine that was properly flagged, place an image in grayscale (Fit to frame proportionally) at 150% size.

On any mine that exploded or was not found before the game ended, place an image in red (Fit to frame proportionally).

On the mine that exploded, the image should be made to be 250% in size.

On all squares adjacent to the mine that caused the game to end, place an image at the center of the square, behind the text, in red.

On all squares that were revealed that had no numbers, put a 50% Grayscale image in the center. However, do not put an image in any “zero square” that is fully surrounded by other “zero squares”. Do not put an image on a “zero square” that is only adjacent to 1 squares.

On squares that are flagged or exposed mines that are more than 2 rows and columns away from the exploded mine, make them 75% scale. Flagged mines should be 100% if they are far away.

On the 16 squares one space away from the exploded mine, place a 50% red image.

PLACE TEXT

Starting from the top left, moving right and down, on any numbered space, place a letter from the title and author in order, in Univers 65 at 72pt.

If the numbered space is 3 or higher, make the text Red and 88pt in 73 weight. If the numbered space is a 1, make the text 48pt and lowercase and in Bodoni 55.

On the squares diagonal to all exploded mines add the next character from the title/author (cycle if you need to) in 48pt red uppercase, placed in the corner closest to the mine. Also add centered 30pt red uppercase letters in the 24 squares two spaces away from the exploded mine in all directions.

On all 1 squares, that have on at least two other 1 squares on the adjacent sides, make the font 30pt. On all 3 or higher squares that have at least two other 3 or higher squares on the adjacent sides, make the font 100pt.



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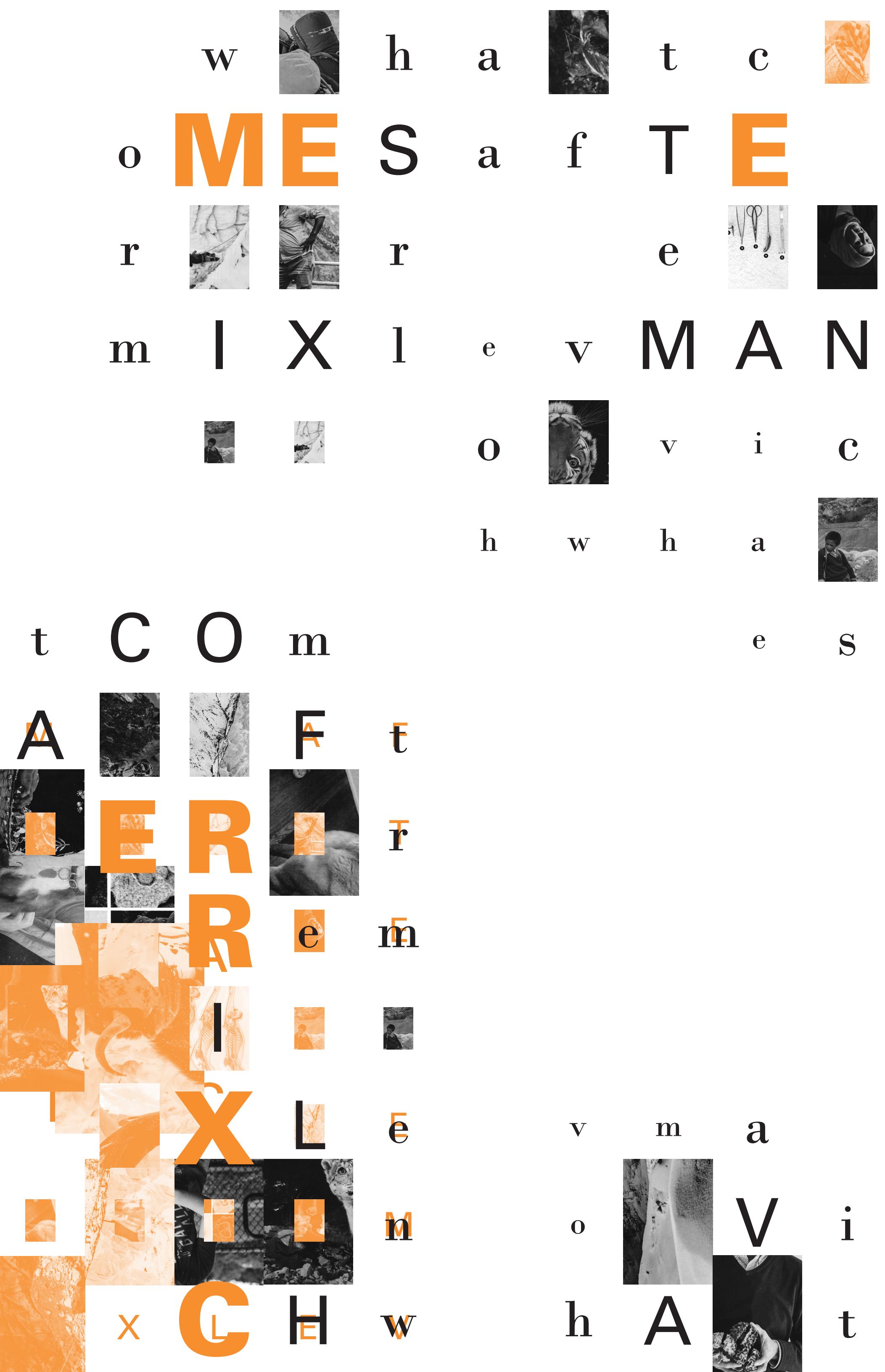
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COMP RULES

All Games of Minesweeper should use Grid C, which is 10x14.

PLAY MINESWEPER

Play the Game with 15 mines for Poster One, 20 Mines for Poster Two, and 25 Mines for Poster Three.

PLACE IMAGES

All images should be centered in the GRID SQUARE, unless specified otherwise.

On all correctly FLAGGED MINES, place a 1" image in GRayscale in the GRID SQUARE. The image should not feature a person.

IF A MINE EXPLODED TO END THE GAME:

On the MINE that exploded, place a 2.5" image in ORANGE in the GRID SQUARE. On the 4 directly adjacent GRID SQUARES, place the same image at 1" in ORANGE, each rotated to have the bottom of the image facing the original.

On all images that are at least 2 spaces away from the DETONATED MINE, reduce their size to .75".

In a ring one space around the DETONATED MINE, place 16 ORANGE images at .5".

PLACE TEXT

From upper left corner to lower-right corner, place a character from the title and then author of the paper on all NUMBERED GRID SQUARES. Start by adding characters on the highest numbers to the lowest (All 3s, then all 2s, then all 1s).

On all 1S, the character should be in BODONI REGULAR at 24PT in UPPERCASE. If the 1 touch 1 or FEWER other 1S, reduce the size to 14PT.

On all 2S, the character should be in UNIVERS 65 at 36PT.

On all 3S, the character should be in UNIVERS 65 at 48PT.

On all 4S, the character should be in UNIVERS 65 at 80PT.

IF A MINE EXPLODED TO END THE GAME:

All 3S and 4S should be in ORANGE.

Around the small ring of images around the DETONATED MINE, make another ring of letters in UNIVERS 65 at 23PT in ORANGE.

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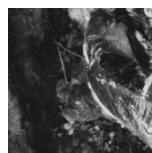
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COMP RULES

All Games of Minesweeper should use Grid C, which is 10x14.

PLAY MINESWEPER

Play the Game with 15 mines for Poster One, 20 Mines for Poster Two, and 25 Mines for Poster Three.

PLACE IMAGES

All images should be centered in the GRID SQUARE, unless specified otherwise.

On all correctly FLAGGED MINES, place a 1" image in GRayscale in the GRID SQUARE. The image should not feature a person.

IF A MINE EXPLODED TO END THE GAME:

On the MINE that exploded, place a 2.5" image in ORANGE in the GRID SQUARE. On the 4 directly adjacent GRID SQUARES, move one more square away from the EXLODED MINE and place the same image at .75" in ORANGE, each rotated to have the bottom of the image facing the original. On the 4 GRID SQUARES that are one square away from the corner of the EXPLODED MINE, place a .5" image in ORANGE. All ORANGE images should feature a person.

PLACE TEXT

From upper left corner to lower-right corner, place a character from the title and then author of the paper on all NUMBERED GRID SQUARES. Start by adding a characters on the highest numbers to the lowest (All 3s, then all 2s, then all 1s).

On all 1S, the character should be in BODONI REGULAR at 24PT in UPPERCASE.

On all 2S, the character should be in UNIVERS 65 at 36PT.

On all 3S, the character should be in UNIVERS 48 at 72PT.

On all 4S, the character should be in UNIVERS 65 at 80PT.

IF A MINE EXPLODED TO END THE GAME:

All 3S and 4S should be in ORANGE.



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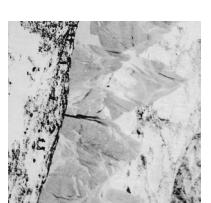
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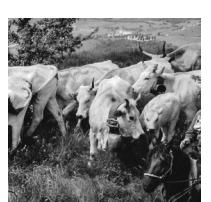


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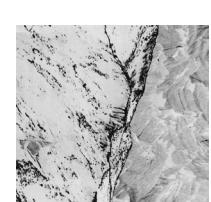


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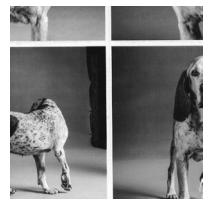
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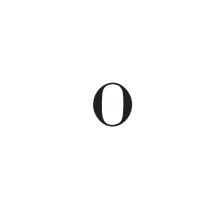
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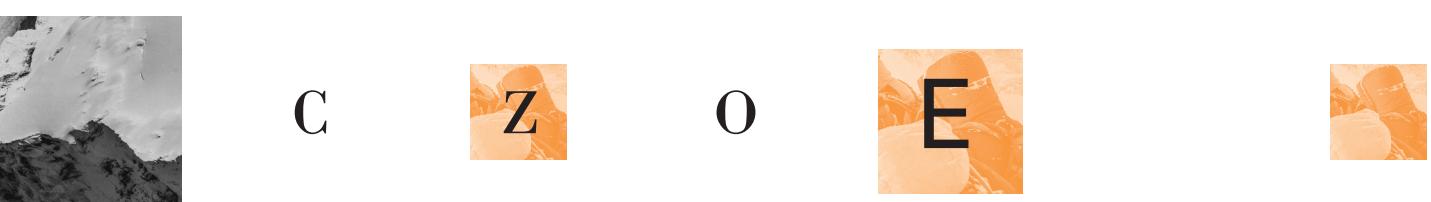
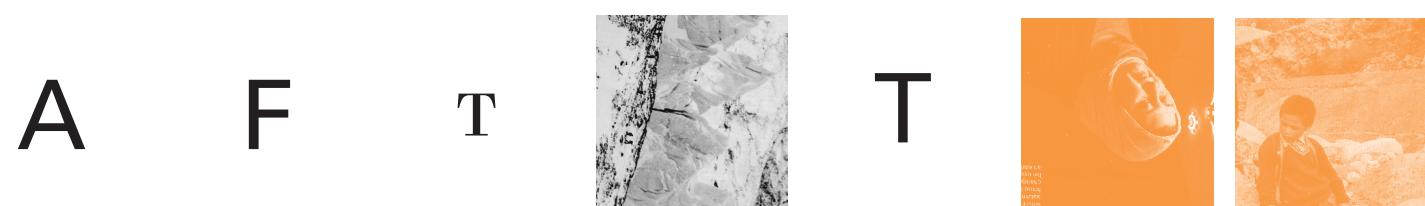
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COMP RULES

All Games of Minesweeper should use Grid C, which is 10x14.

PLAY MINESWEPER

Play the Game with 15 mines for Poster One, 20 Mines for Poster Two, and 25 Mines for Poster Three.

PLACE IMAGES

All images should be centered in the GRID SQUARE, unless specified otherwise.

On all correctly FLAGGED MINES, place a 2" image in GRayscale in the GRID SQUARE. The image should not feature a person.

IF A MINE EXPLODED TO END THE GAME:

On the MINE that exploded, place a 5" image in ORANGE in the GRID SQUARE. On the 4 directly adjacent GRID SQUARES, place the same image at 1" in ORANGE, each rotated to have the bottom of the image facing the original.

On any other DETONATED MINES, place a 2.5" image in ORANGE in the GRID SQUARE.

On all images that are within 2 spaces from the DETONATED MINE, increase their size to 3".

In a ring one space around the DETONATED MINE, place 16 ORANGE images at .5".

PLACE TEXT

From upper left corner to lower-right corner, place a character from the title and then author of the paper on all NUMBERED GRID SQUARES. Start by adding a characters on the highest numbers to the lowest (All 3s, then all 2s, then all 1s).

On all 1S, the character should be in BODONI REGULAR at 36PT in UPPERCASE. If the 1 touch 1 or FEWER other 1S, reduce the size to 24PT.

On all 2S, the character should be in UNIVERS 65 at 48PT.

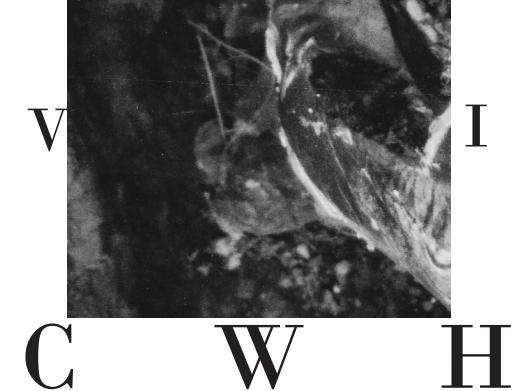
On all 3S, the character should be in UNIVERS 65 at 60PT.

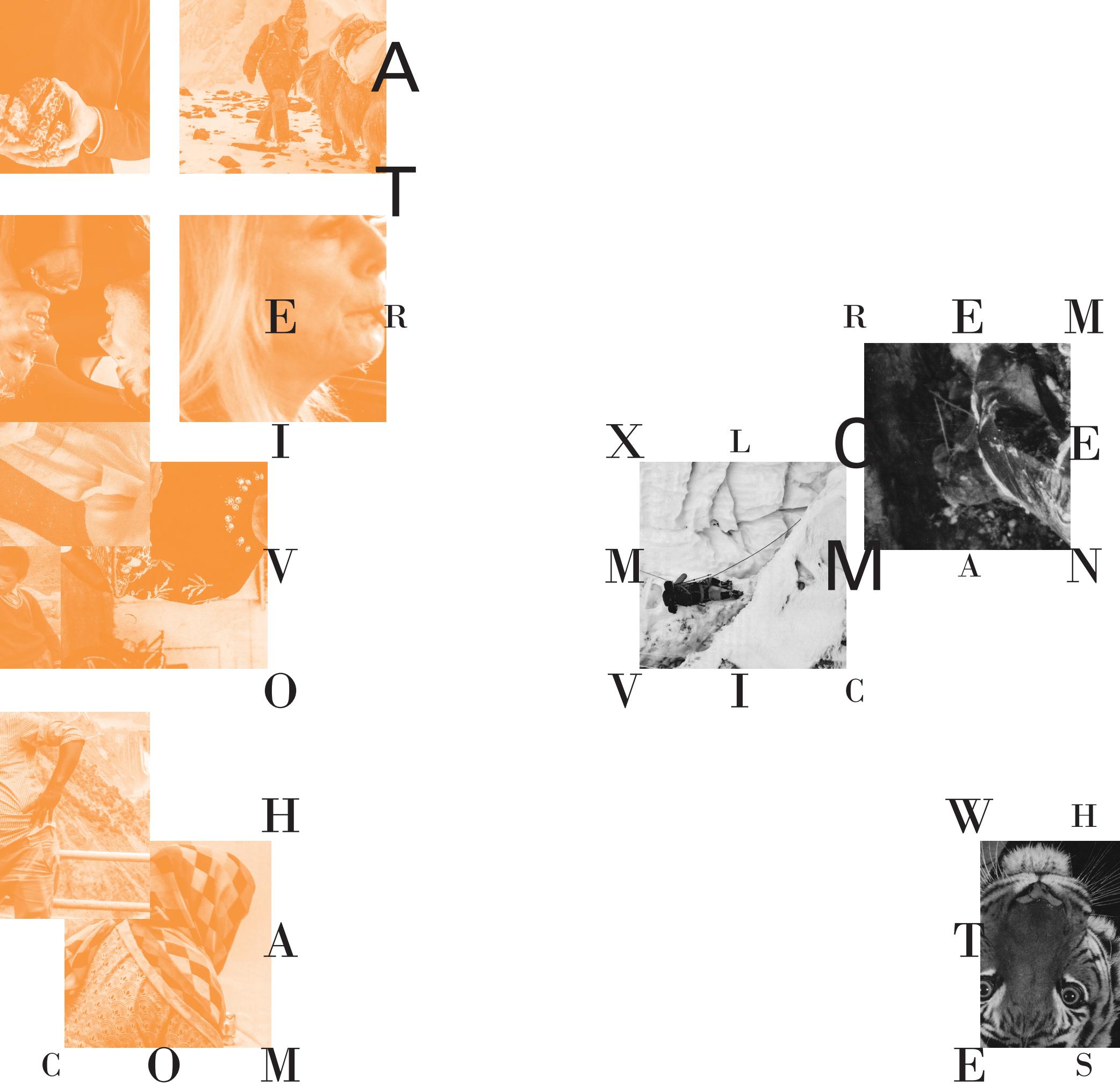
On all 4S, the character should be in UNIVERS 65 at 92PT.

IF A MINE EXPLODED TO END THE GAME:

All 3S and 4S should be in ORANGE.

Around the small ring of images around the DETONATED MINE, make another ring of letters in UNIVERSE 65 at 23PT in ORANGE.









FINAL RULES

All Games of Minesweeper should use Grid C, which is 10x14.

PLAY MINESWEPER

Visit the following page: <http://rossdanielconover.com/MINESWEEPER/>

Play the Game with 15 mines for Poster One, 20 Mines for Poster Two, and 25 Mines for Poster Three.

PLACE IMAGES

All images should be centered in the **Grid Square**, unless specified otherwise.

On all correctly Flagged Mines, place a 2" image in Grayscale in the Grid Square. The image should not feature a person.

IF A MINE EXPLODED TO END THE GAME:

On the Mine that exploded, place a 5" image in Orange in the Grid Square. From the center of the Detonated Mine, move 3 spaces to the Top, Right, Bottom, and Left, placing an image at each square at 1" in Orange, each rotated to have the bottom of the image facing the original. These should all be placed on top all other images.

On any other Detonated Mines, place a 2.5" image in Orange in the Grid Square.

On all images that are within 2 spaces from the detonated Mine, increase their size to 3".

On all images that are at least 4 spaces from the Detonated Mine, decrease their size to 1.5" for Grayscale and 2" for Orange.

On all images that are at least 6 spaces from the Detonated Mine, decrease their size to 1" for Grayscale and 1.5" for Orange.

PLACE TEXT

From upper left corner to lower-right corner, place a character from the title and then author of the paper on all Numbered Grid Squares. Start by adding a characters on the highest numbers to the lowest (All 3s, then all 2s, then all 1s).

On all 1s, the character should be in Bodoni Regular at 30pt in Uppercase. If the 1 touches 1 or fewer other 1s, reduce the size to 24pt. If the 1 touches 2 or More other 1s, increase the size to 36pt.

On all 2s, the character should be in Univers 65 at 48pt.

On all 3s, the character should be in Univers 65 at 60pt.

On all 4s, the character should in Univers 65 at 104pt.

IF A MINE EXPLODED TO END THE GAME:

All 3s and 4s should be in Orange.

Three spaces away and fully around the Detonated Mine, make a ring of letters in Universe 65 at 23PT in Orange.



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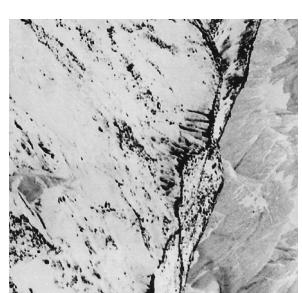
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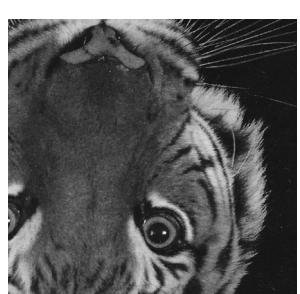
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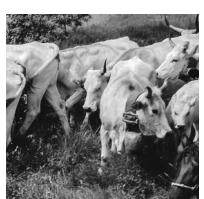








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