

This is a portfolio of projects by [David Reinfurt](#).

I am an independent graphic designer working in a number of different arrangements. I work alone, either under my own name or that of my small software company, O R G. I work with designer Stuart Bertolotti-Bailey under the shared pseudonym Dexter Sinister. I run a publishing project called The Serving Library with Bertolotti-Bailey, curator Francesca Bertolotti-Bailey, and novelist Vincenzo Latronico. Otherwise, I typically work with an extended network of artists, designers, writers, architects, often on more than one project over time. These conversations keep my practice moving. I teach at Princeton University.

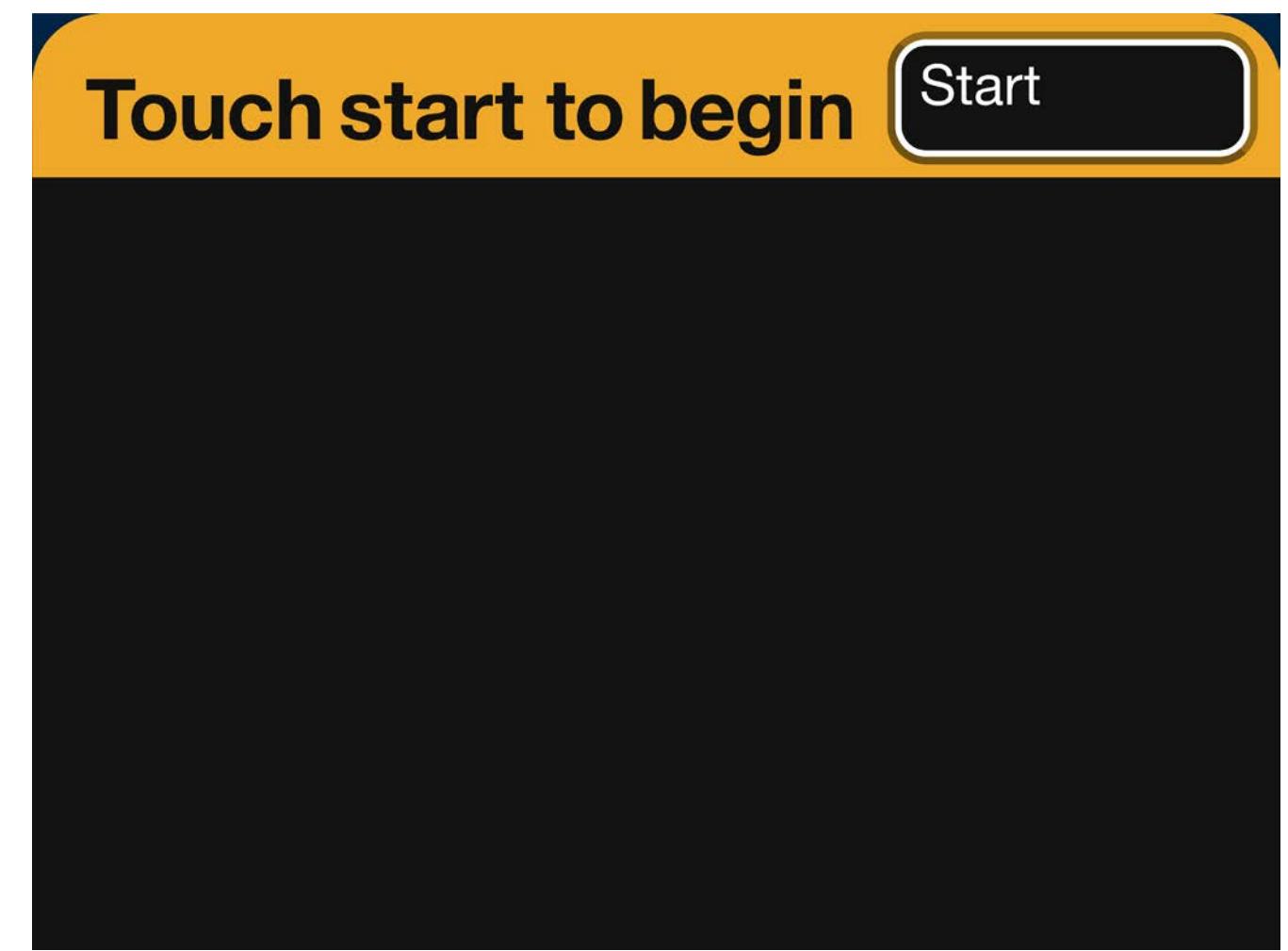
In this portfolio are 10 projects which span 2 years of practice.

1. Metrocard Vending Machine Interface

In 1997, I was lead interaction designer of the touchscreen interface for NYC Metropolitan Transportation Authority electronic vending that has replaced attendants in the New York City subways. The machines were designed with Industrial Designer Masamichi Udagawa while we were both employed by IDEO San Francisco. A driving criteria for the design was the Americans with Disabilities Act and so the interface uses large, high contrast graphics and a clearly articulated sequence to make a cohesive and accessible experience for a massively diverse public.

This interface was designed with brutal, simple forms, and a very flexible layout explicitly to accommodate change over time. The software has been used by millions of riders daily for more than twenty years — a virtual eternity for an interface.

1. Metrocard Vending Machine Interface



Please select MetroCard type

MetroCard

SingleRide

MetroPass

CANCEL

You have selected MetroCard

Please select transaction

Add Value
to your
card

Get
New card

Trade In
cards

CANCEL

New MetroCard

What amount do you want?

\$ 3.00

2 RIDES

\$ 6.00

4 RIDES

\$15.00

10 RIDES

\$30.00

20 RIDES

\$60.00

40 RIDES

\$15.00

10 RIDES

\$60.00

40 RIDES

MORE OPTIONS

CANCEL

New MetroCard

\$ 6.00

4 RIDES

How do you want to pay?

Cash

Credit / ATM
Card

CANCEL

New MetroCard

\$ 6.00
4 RIDES

Please pay

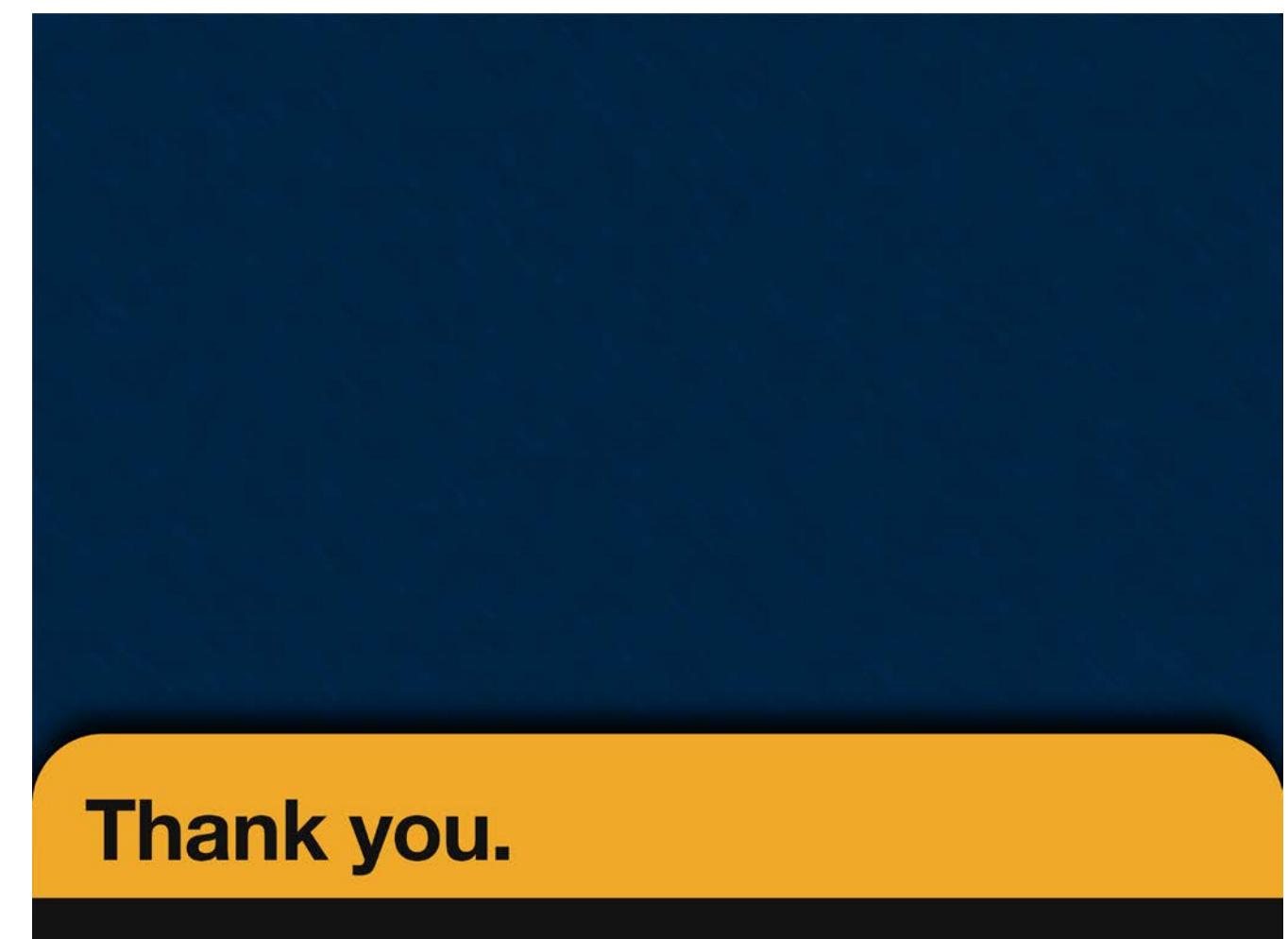
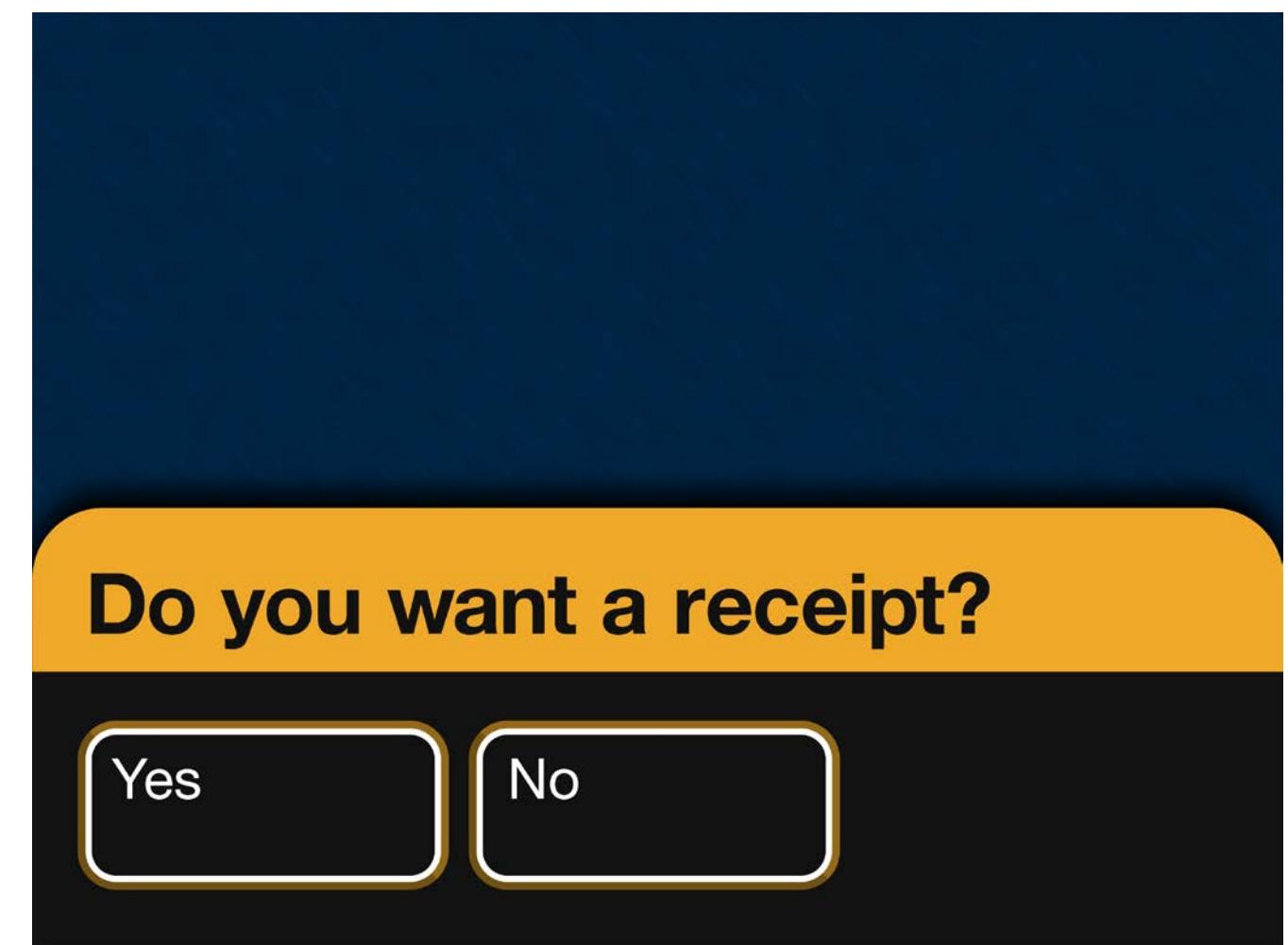
\$ 6.00

CANCEL

\$ 6.00
4 RIDES

Take your MetroCard







2. O R G

O-R-G was founded on the first business day of the new millennium (January 3, 2000) as both a project in how contemporary design practices organize themselves and also as a working design studio. It began as a one-person studio which self-consciously masked itself as a large corporation, adopting a generic three-letter acronym, getting a telephone number with extra zeros, and styling the studio to match a considerably more corporate environment.

From the start, O-R-G worked largely on electronic projects from websites and software for graphic design, to screensavers and applications. The studio evolved to include a diverse range of collaborators and contractors, but always in a flexible arrangement. In 2006, O-R-G closed the studio and distributed all of its books, furniture, and computer equipment to those who helped make it work. By 2015, O-R-G reformed as a “small software company,” developing and publishing apps, screensavers, and other small chunks of code.

This is a project in making a sustainable, diverse, enduring design practice. For more than 20 years O-R-G has modeled a cross-disciplinary, fluid, and uncompromised approach, also nurturing a generation of graphic designers who went on to found their own studios including mgmt design, Life of the Mind, Stewd.io, Information Office, and Project Projects.

<http://www.o-r-g.com>



Studio portrait produced for "How to Make a One-Person Firm Seem Like a Giant Corporation (The True Story of O R G inc.),"
New York Times Magazine (2001)

1-000103000 383 CCCS

CERTIFICATE OF INCORPORATION

OF

ORG inc.

Under Section 402 of the Business Corporation Law

RECEIVED

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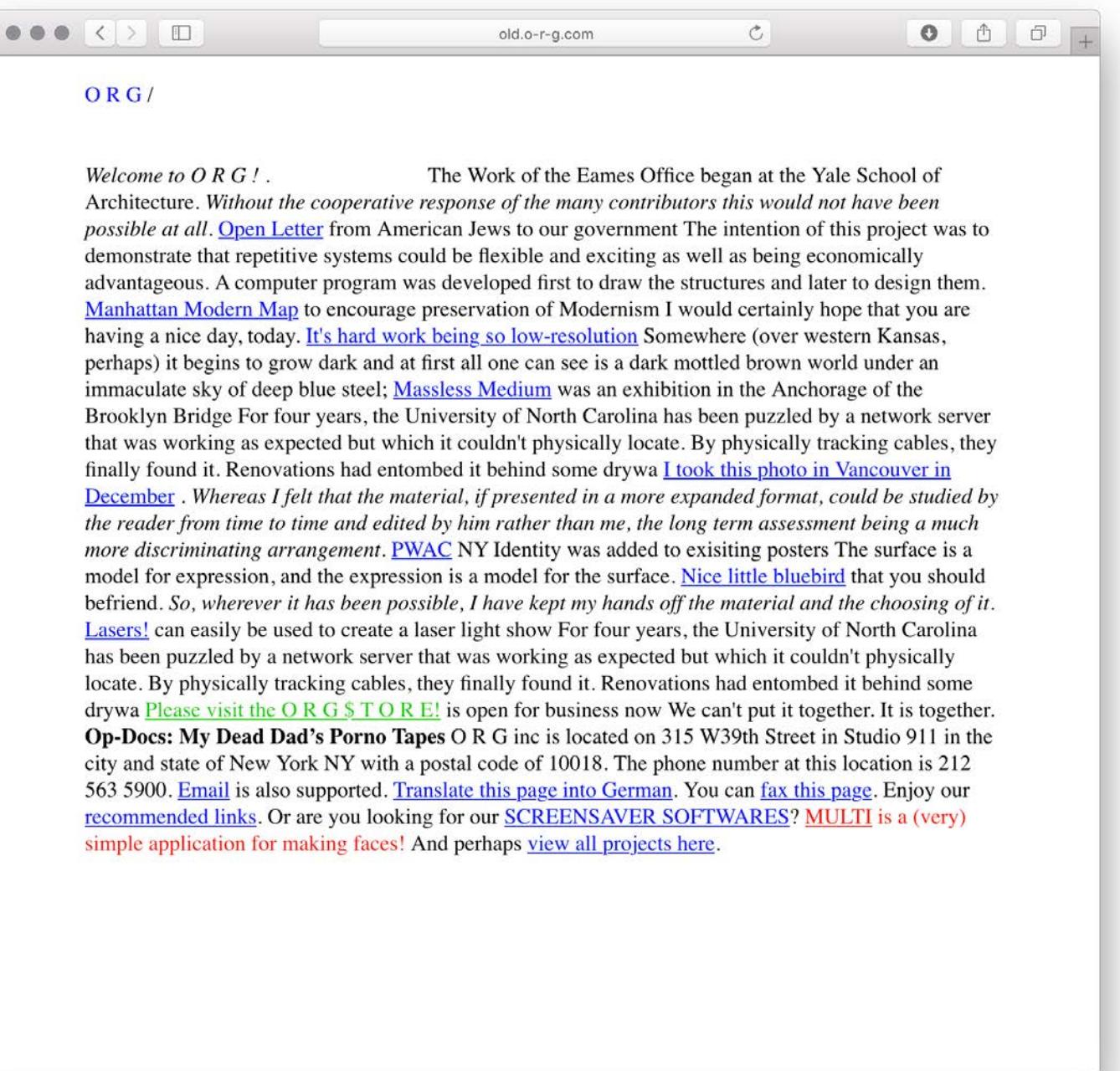
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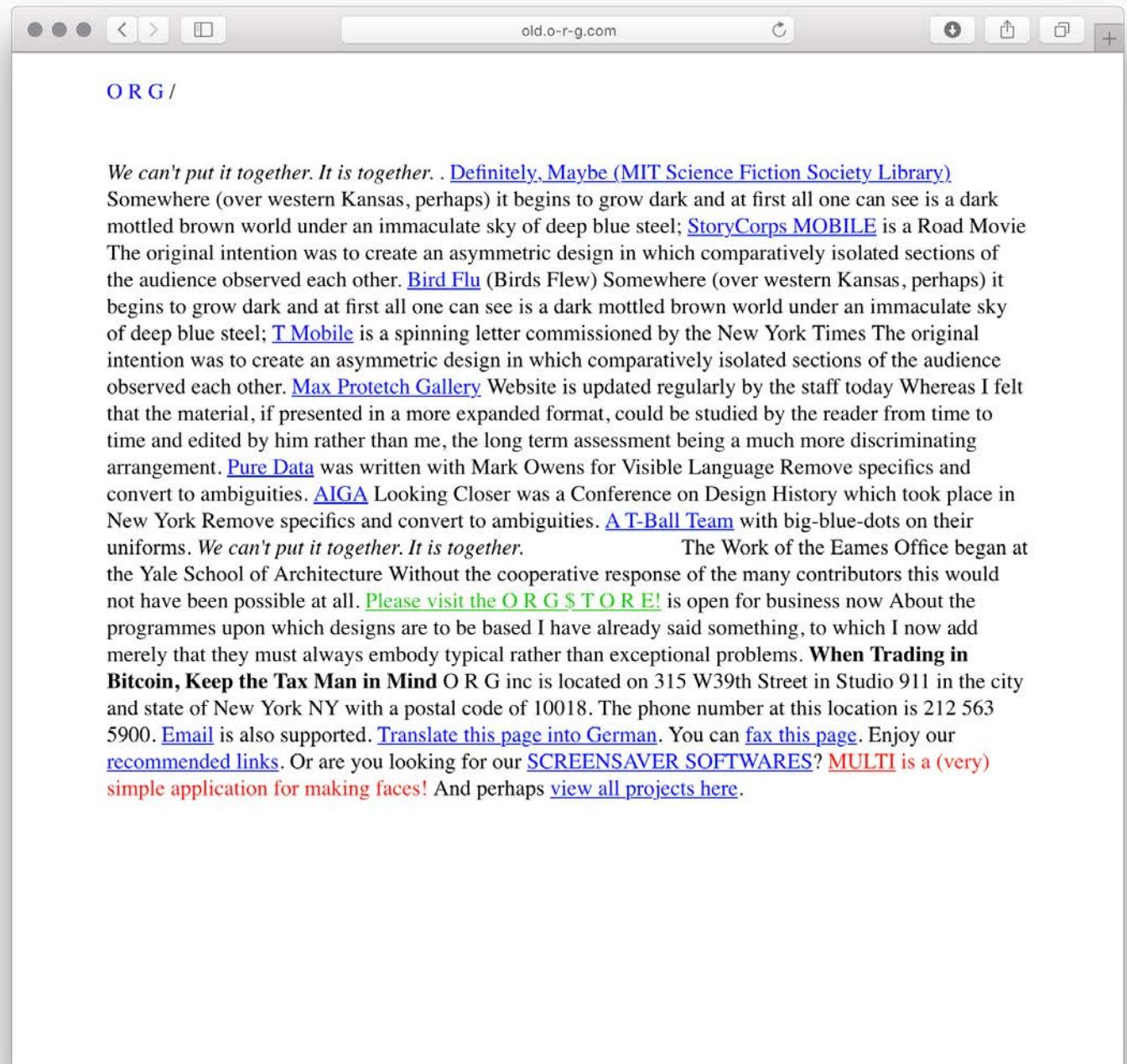
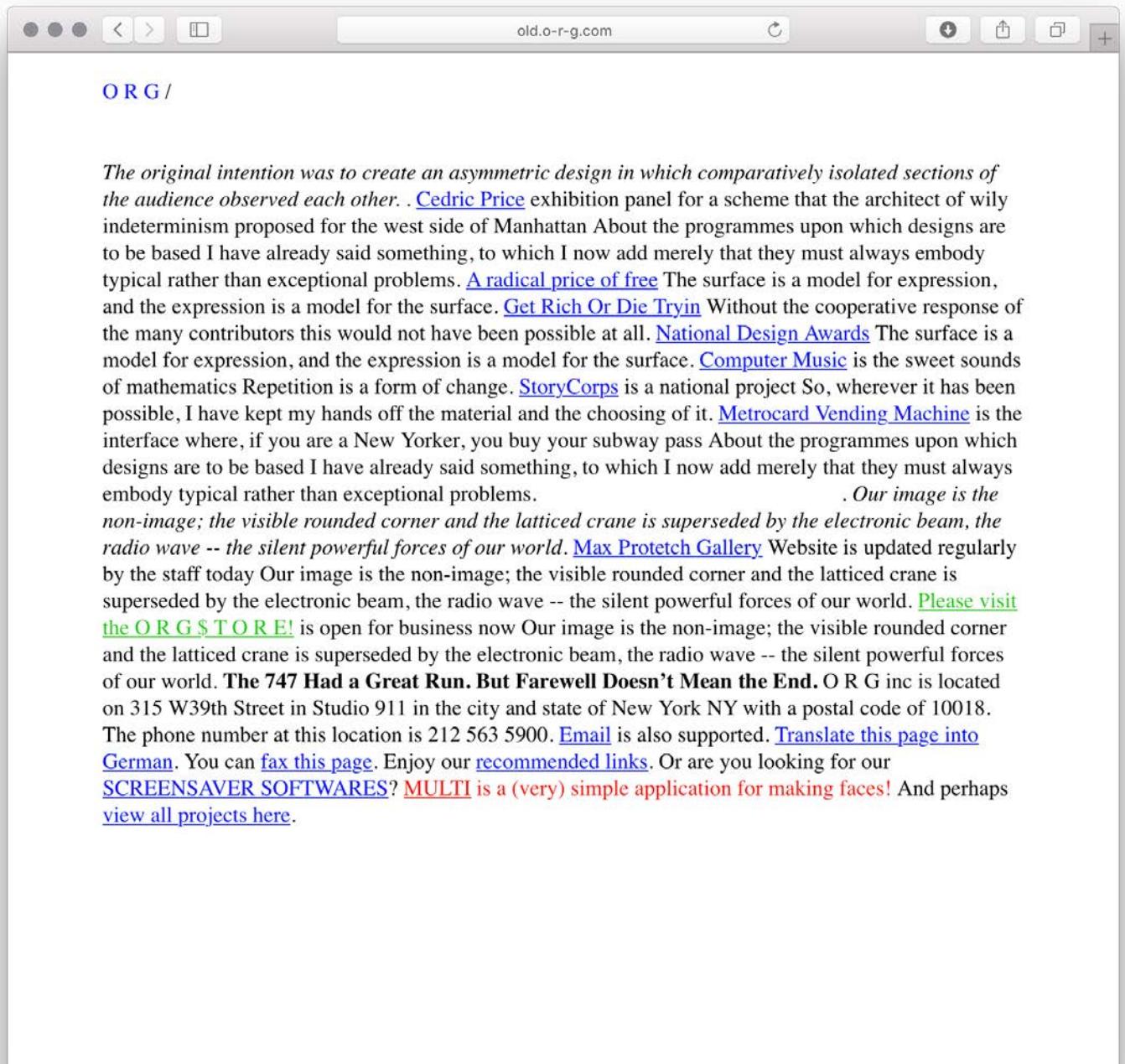
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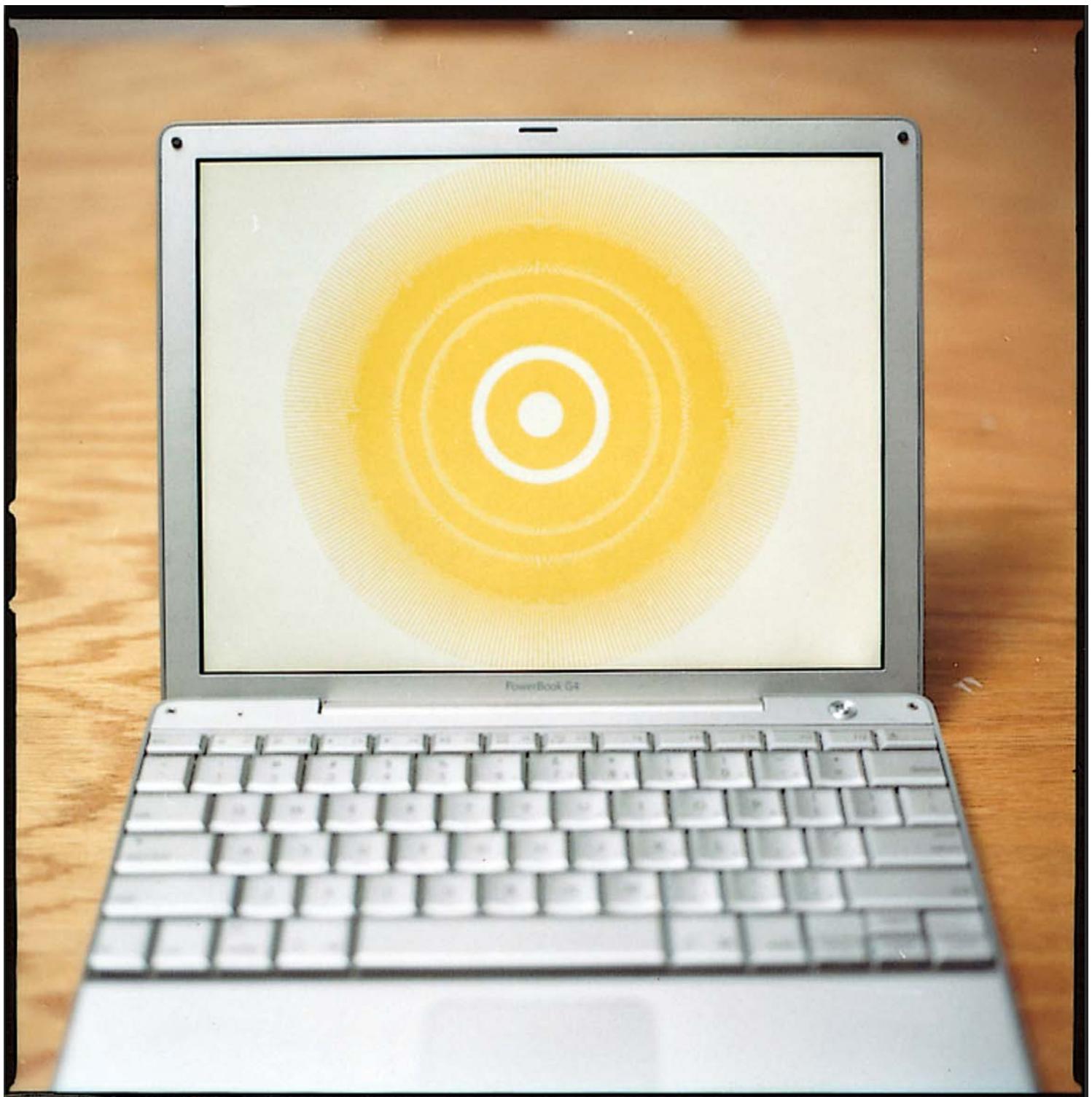




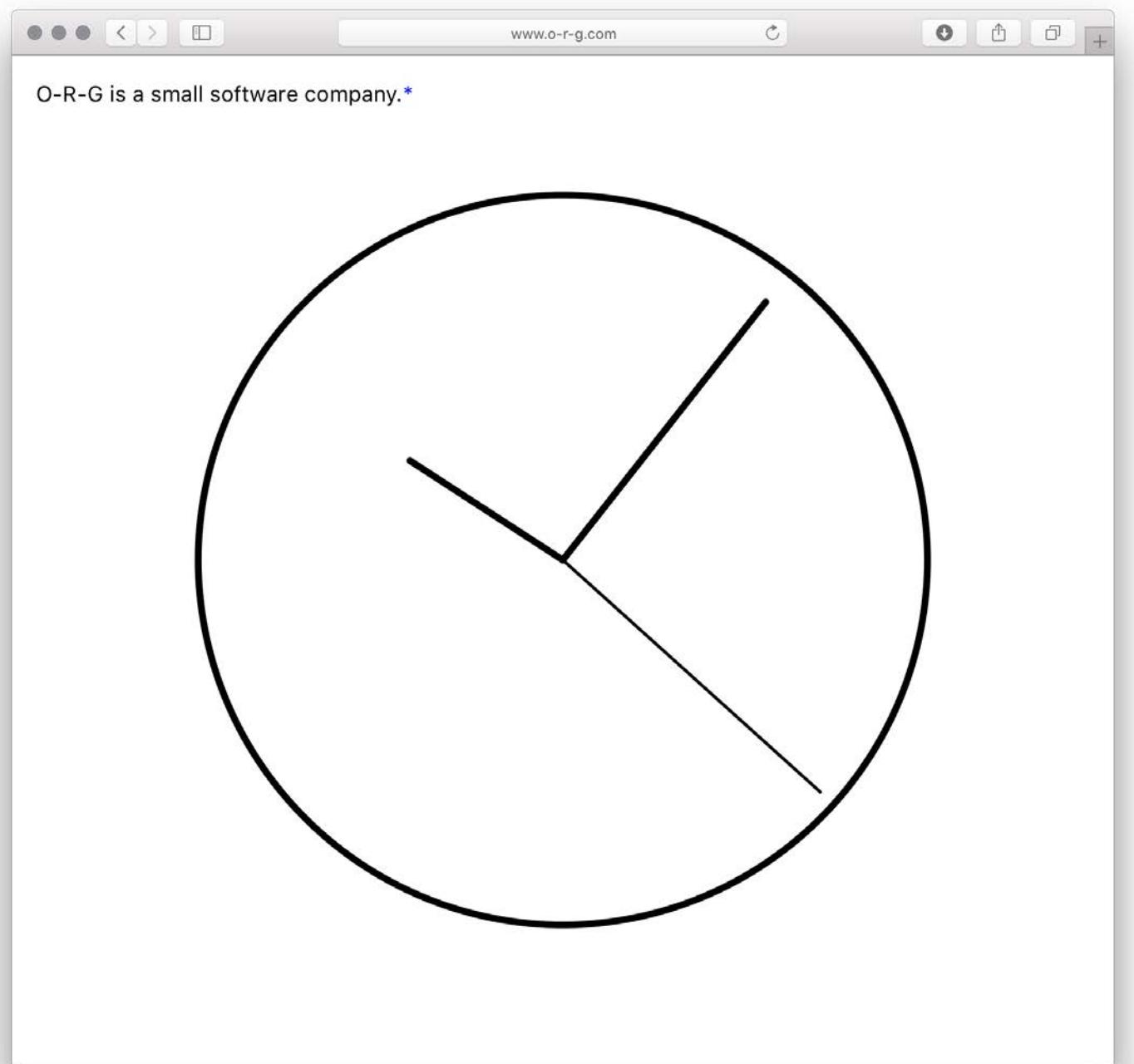
Business card produced with custom software that tracks current price of gold on the exchange, varying letter thickness to match the real-time condition (2001)







Perhaps there is something left to save..., custom screensaver software that uses local sunrise/sunset times to adjust graphics (2002)

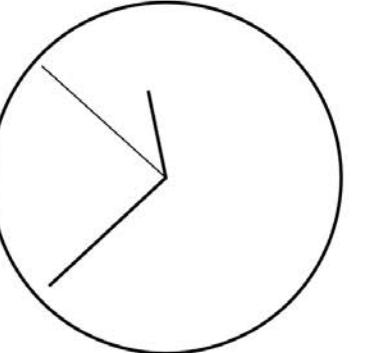


O-R-G is a small software company.*

o-r-g.com/apps

O-R-G Apps

O-R-G designs, programs, and publishes iOS apps. So far, there are 3 — [Wyoscan](#) is a clock based on a previous model, [Jules](#) is a screensaver of sorts, and [Multi](#) makes faces from bits of typographic furniture. All are available for \$.99 each in the [App Store](#), now.



o-r-g.com/apps/multi

O-R-G Multi



Enzo Mari spent the year 1957 drawing an apple. The result, [La Mela](#), is a large silkscreen print produced as an artist multiple by Danese Milano continuously since. Mari lavished time on the drawing, preparing it for industrial manufacture by abolishing detail and reducing it to an essential form. He was not looking to draw AN apple, but rather THE apple — a perfect symbol designed for the serial logic of industrial reproduction. In place of the unique work of art and its privileged market, multiples used contemporary manufacturing to produce many exact copies circulated as consumer products.

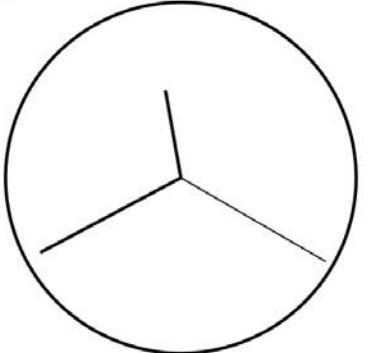
[Multi](#) reconsiders this process 50 years later, as software coding has replaced the industrial assembly line. At any one moment, this software presents one of 1,728 possible arrangements, each a face built from minimal typographic furniture. Instead of many identical copies from one design, Multi is one original set of instructions constantly

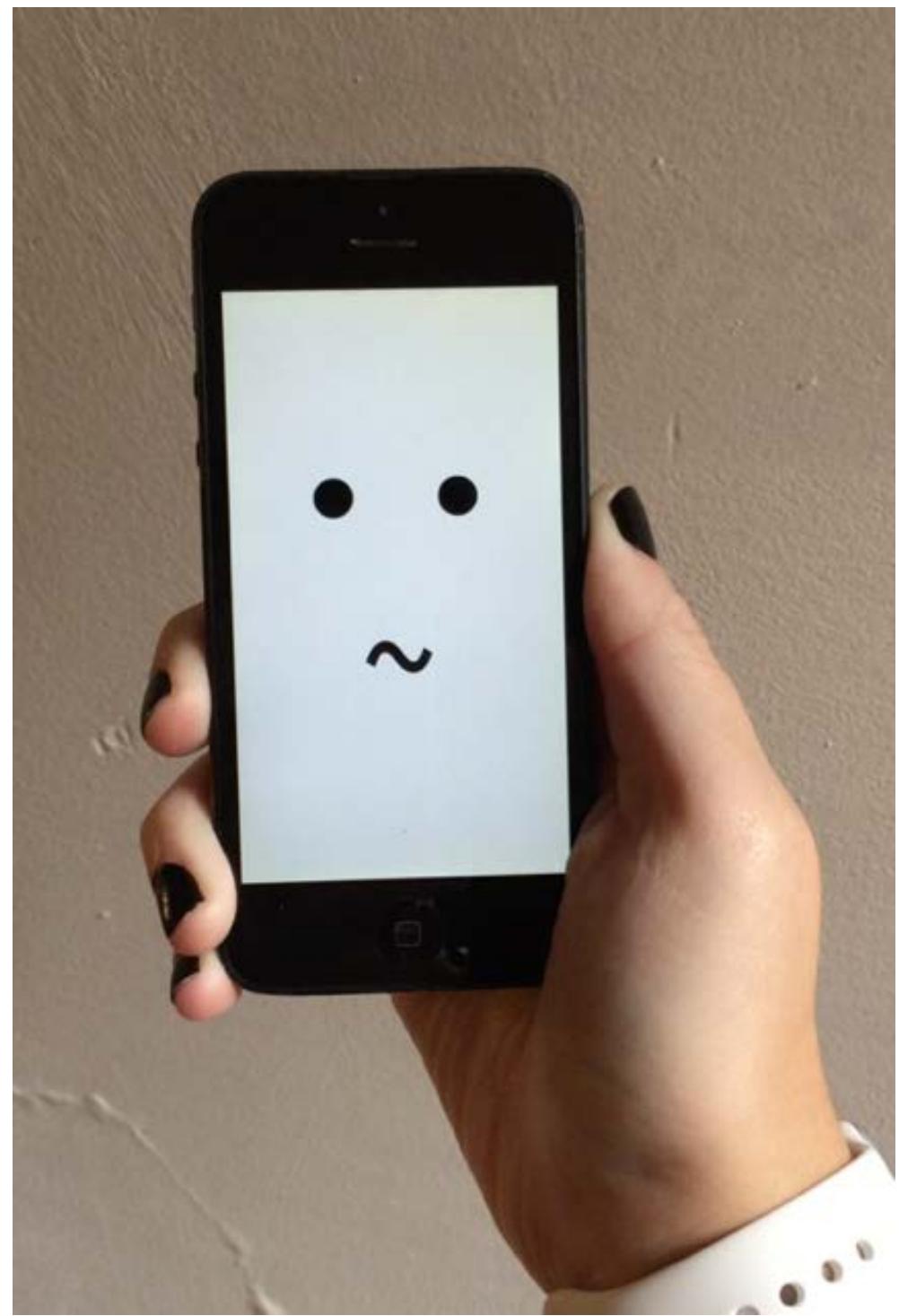
Launch [Multi](#). Tap the screen anywhere to stop. Tap again to start. Tap and drag to adjust the speed (up for faster, down for slower). Working from a limited stock of punctuation glyphs, Multi tirelessly assembles various configurations.

Save a particular face by pressing and holding your finger on the screen until you see a flash (like a screenshot). Continue holding down to text it to a friend.

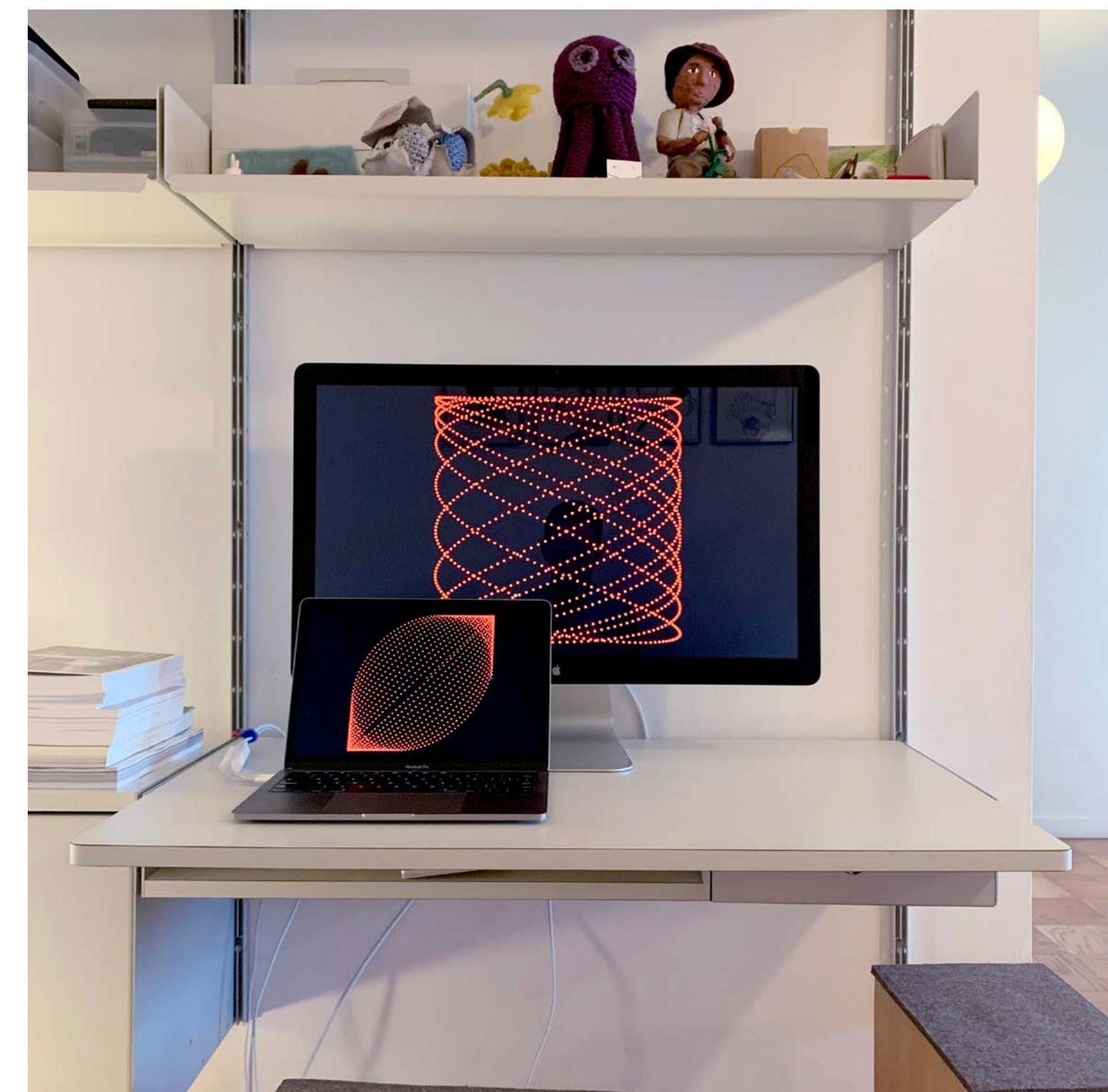
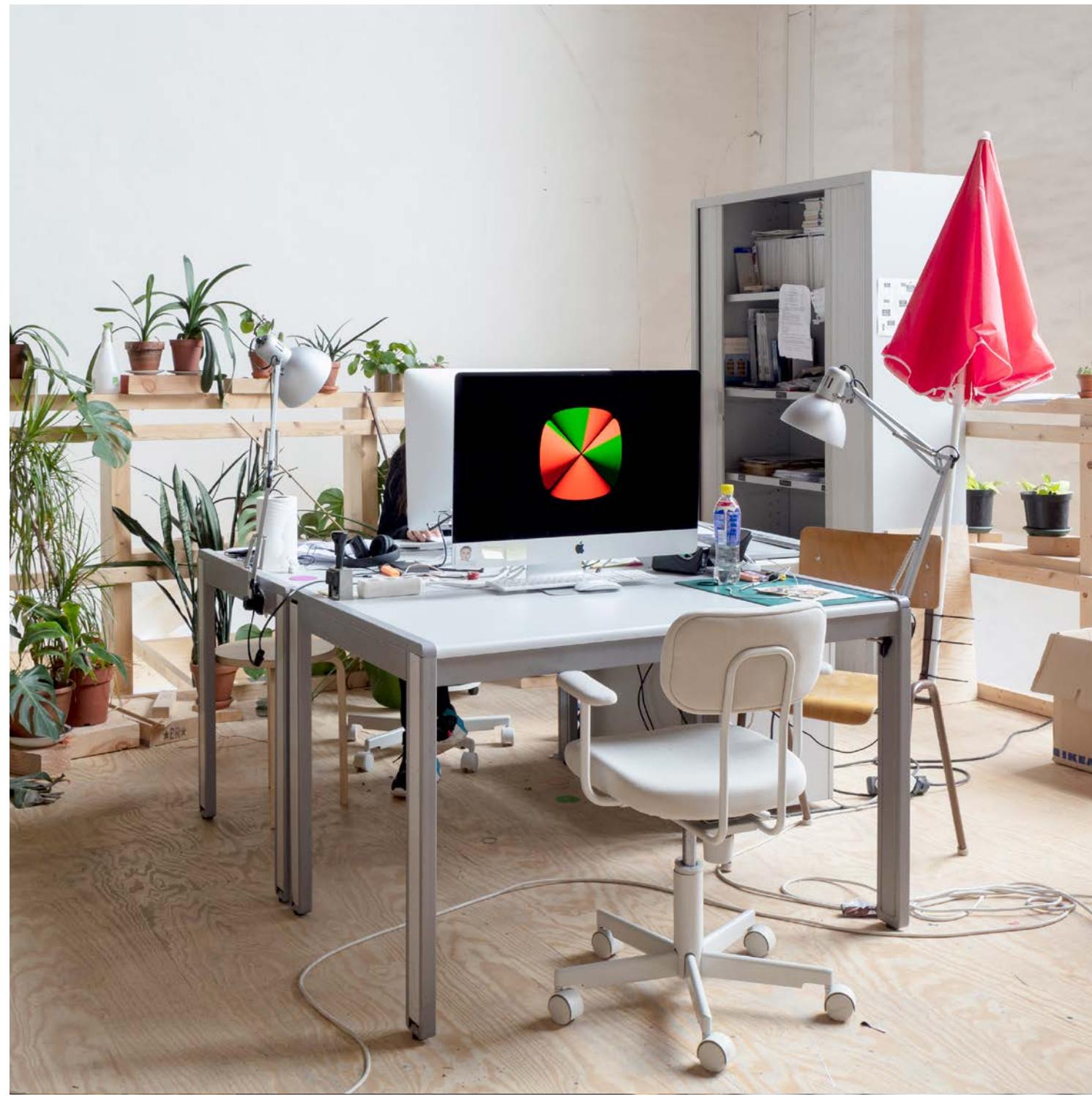
*

FOR IPHONE, IPAD IOS 6.0+
\$.99 / [Buy in the App Store now . . .](#)





Multi, a useless software app which generates random faces from punctuation for Apple iTunes App Store (2015)



Left: Tetracono, screensaver software for MacOS based on a product by Bruno Munari from 1965, Ghent, Belgium (2017)
Above: After His Beautiful Machine of 1855, screensaver software for MacOS, New York, New York (2019)

3. Dot Dot Dot

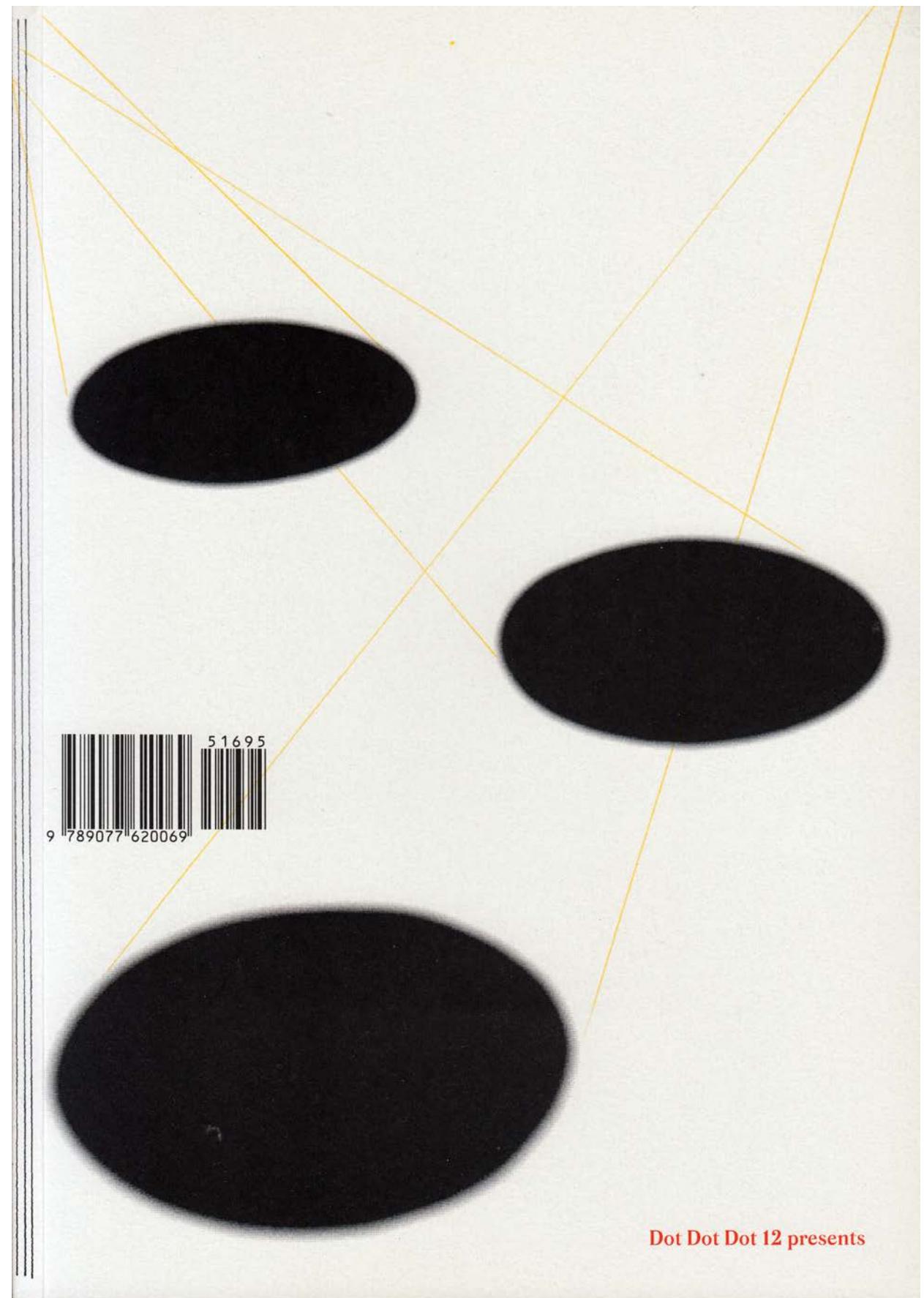
Founded in 2000 by Stuart Bertolotti-Bailey and Peter Bilak and running through twenty semi-annual issues, Dot Dot Dot was a self-described “left-field arts journal.” From issue 11 through issue 20 (2006–2011), it was co-edited, designed and published by Stuart Bertolotti-Bailey and David Reinfurt through Dexter Sinister — Just-in-Time Workshop & Occasional Bookstore.

The journal comprised a resolutely mixed bag of subjects, writing styles, lengths, and visual formats. In 2006, when Dexter Sinister began editing and publishing the journal, it became something of a house organ populated by a constellation of collaborators who would also appear in additional Dexter Sinister projects and publications. The magazine addressed design, although typically from the side rather than head-on. Dot Dot Dot’s oblique, some might call it meandering, approach won it an avid readership of committed generalists. As such, designers were the most significant segment of both who wrote in the journal and also who read it. Later issues of the journal were increasing tied to specific settings, where the material was written, or produced, or edited, or staged, or designed (sometimes all of these) in public.

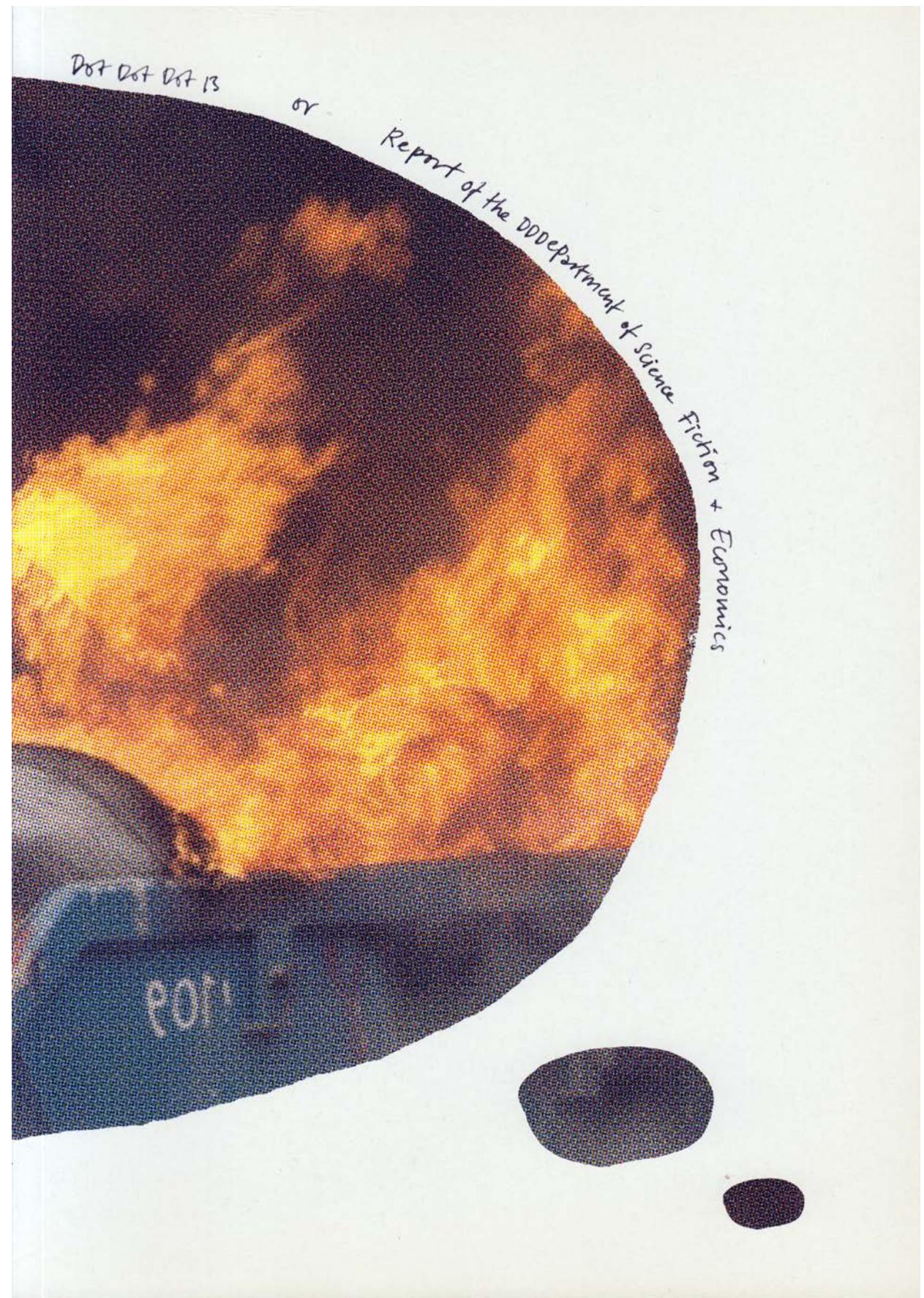
The journal introduced a free-roving form of writing by graphic designers and modeled an agency in editing and publishing which has since become common practice in the field.

<http://www.dot-dot-dot.us>

3. Dot Dot Dot



3. Dot Dot Dot



Dot Dot Dot 13 (2006), produced around Manifesta 6 Biennial, Nicosia, Cyprus

3. Dot Dot Dot



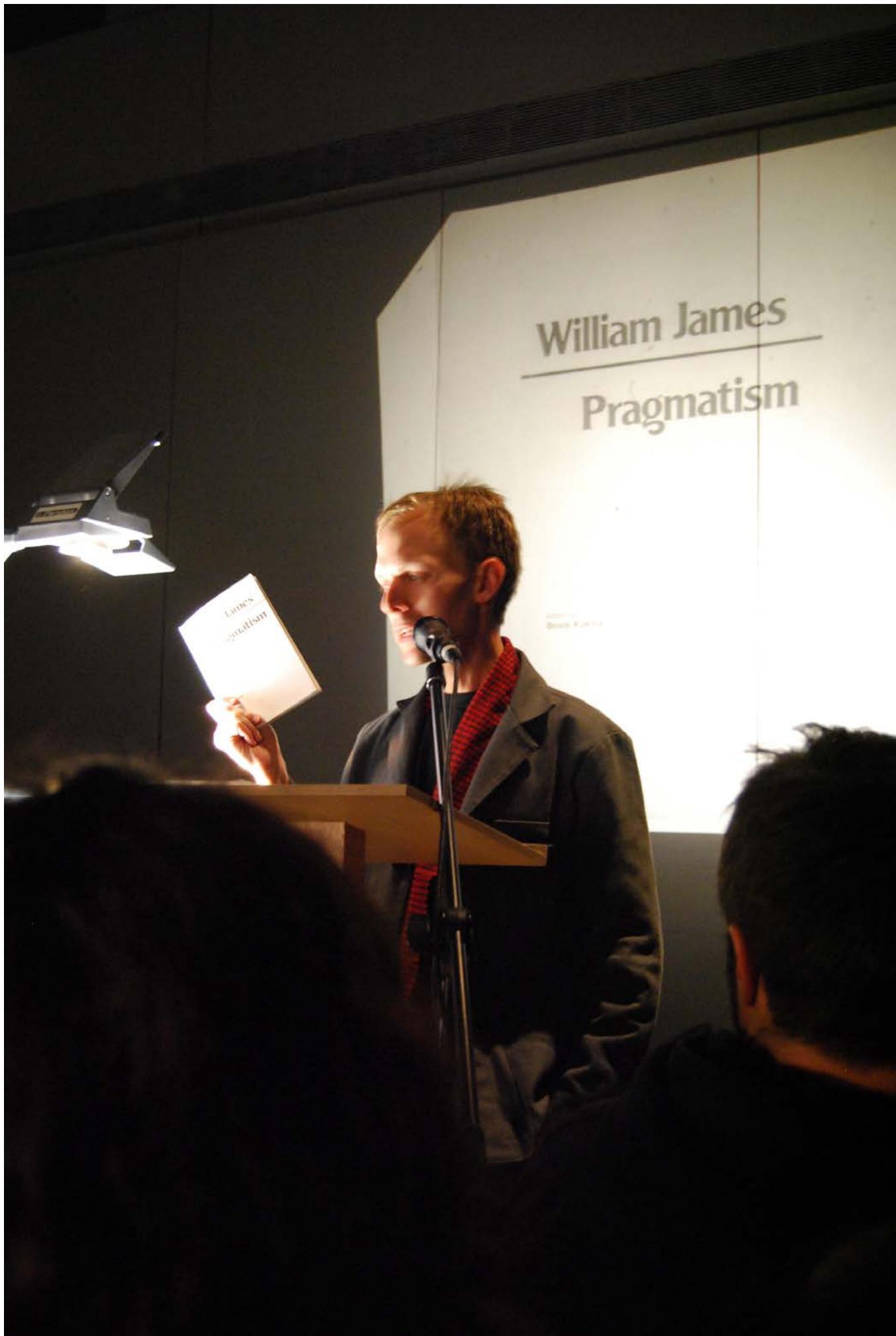
Dot Dot Dot 15, written, edited, designed, and printed over three weeks on location in the Contemporary Art Center, Geneva (2006)



Dot Dot Dot 15, Riso printing issue on site (2006)



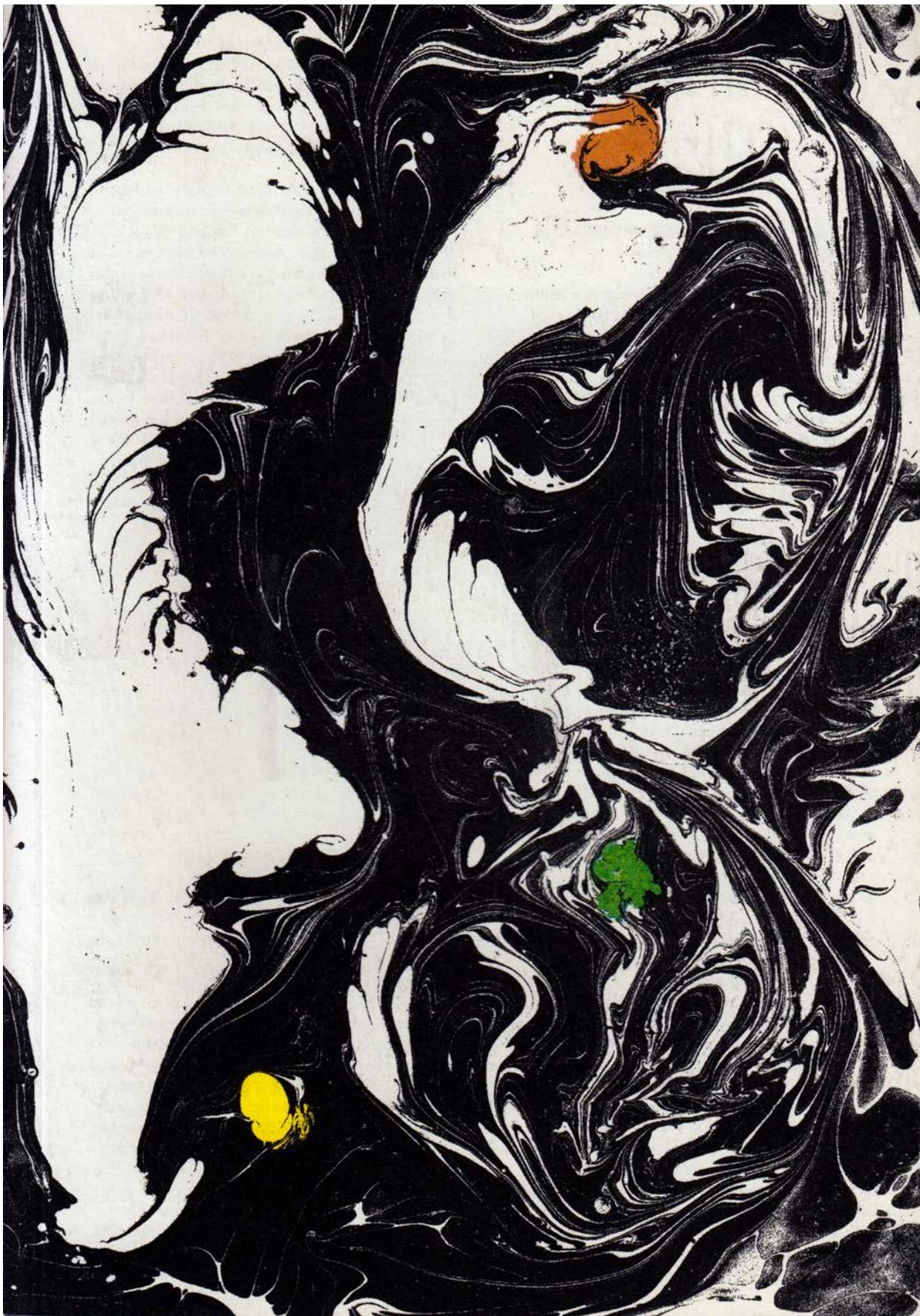
Dot Dot Dot 15 (2006)



DOT DOT DOT 17 (read) (spoken) (delivered)
from two (lecterns) (supports) (props) at
the Embankment Galleries, Somerset House,
London on 29/30/31 October 2008 in advance
of being (transcribed) (translated) (transfixed)
and returned at the close of the exhibition
(multiplied) (published) (distributed) on
21 December 2008.



DOT DOT DOT 17 (read) (spoken) (delivered)
from two (lecterns) (supports) (props) at
the Embankment Galleries, Somerset House,
London on 29/30/31 October 2008 in advance
of being (transcribed) (translated) (transfixed)
and returned at the close of the exhibition
(multiplied) (published) (distributed) on
21 December 2008.



Dot Dot Dot 17, front cover, photograph of Genesis P-Orridge by Alex Klein (2009)

Dot Dot Dot 18 — Set in Edinburgh (2009), produced as part of the Randolph Cliff Residency, National Gallery of Scotland and Edinburgh College of Art

ADVERTISEMENT

12

Alc. Vol. 1



Stählemühle
www.staehlemuehle.de

The bottle you hold in your hands is
a contract, executed some 12 years ago.
As one of a community of cooperators,
you agreed to pay per cent of the total
production costs (this container, its contents).

The contract you hold in your hands is
a bottle, due around 2021.
As one of a community of cooperators,
you agree to receive an equal per cent
of the total product (this bottle, its whisky).

Black Whisky

Between the agreement and its isomorphic translation to spirit, nothing was lost and there is no surplus. (All one.)
This process is transparent—regarding tax, there has always been a black market.
The product is published by Dexter Sinister, New York City, U.S.A., and made available at the Serving Library.
Form must be a way of thinking.
Set in Edinburgh, 2009.

See *Message on a Bottle* (2006), www.servinglibrary.org

See *Right to Burn* (2007), www.servinglibrary.org

Interested parties please contact info@dextersinister.org

Further reading:
Eco, U., *The Open Work* (1962)
Froshaug, A., *Typographic Norms* (1964)
Kubler, G., *The Shape of Time* (1962)

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4. Dexter Sinister

Founded in 2006 by David Reinfort and Stuart Bertolotti-Bailey, Dexter Sinister is a shared pseudonym, originally established as a Just-in-Time Workshop & Occasional Bookstore in a basement space on the lower east side of New York City. The workshop was intended to model a Just-In-Time economy of print production, running counter to the contemporary assembly-line realities of large-scale publishing. This involves avoiding waste by working on-demand, utilizing local cheap machinery, considering alternate distribution strategies, and collapsing distinctions of editing, design, production and distribution into one efficient activity.

For five years, Dexter Sinister ran a one-day-a-week bookstore selling a concise range of design and art books. The basement also hosted a regular program of bi-monthly events during this time. All of these activities were collapsed together in a 6 1/2-foot ceilinged basement space with a glass door and minimal storefront. From this modest setup, Dexter Sinister began to be invited to make non-traditional publications and exhibitions, some including performance or duration through a range of host institutions including Whitney Museum of American Art, Performa, Museum of Modern Art, Artists Space, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, Kunsthaus Bregenz, Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius, Lithuania, Centres Georges Pompidou, Venice Biennale (art), Venice Biennale (architecture), The Triennale, Milano, and Museo Jumex, Mexico City.

Dexter Sinister attempts to model publicly, both in the space and through its activities, some of the contradictions around what it means to publish now including overproduction, overreliance on marketing, and unsustainable supply chains. We often question the brief and reframe the deliverables to avoid waste. Through its example, Dexter Sinister has directly fostered and indirectly inspired a constellation of bookshops, exhibition practices, and publishing by designers around the world expanding the de facto definition of graphic design.

<http://www.dextersinister.org>

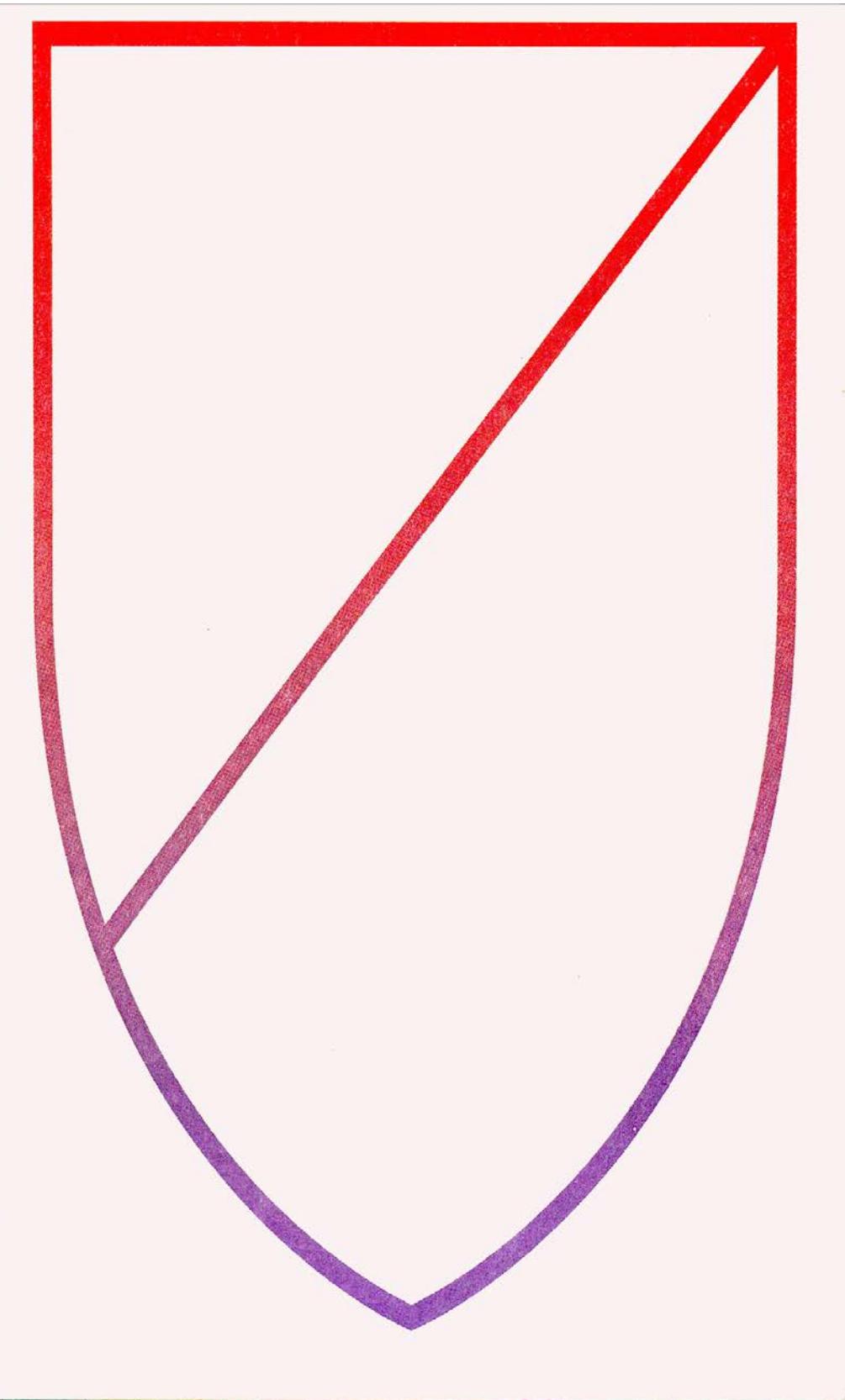




4. Dexter Sinister



4. Dexter Sinister



PHILIP



Notes for an Art School book, back cover

Philip, dystopic science fiction novel collaboratively written by ten people over eight days in Dublin and a dynamic pricing scheme which becomes less expensive as more copies sell with Heman Chong for Project Arts Centre, Dublin (2006)

*A man and wife asleep in bed,
She hears a noise and turns her head, he's gone.
I wish we'd all been ready.
Two men walking up a hill,
One disappears and one's left standing still.
I wish we'd all been ready.
...There's no time to change your mind.
How could you have been so blind?
The Son has come and you've been left behind.*



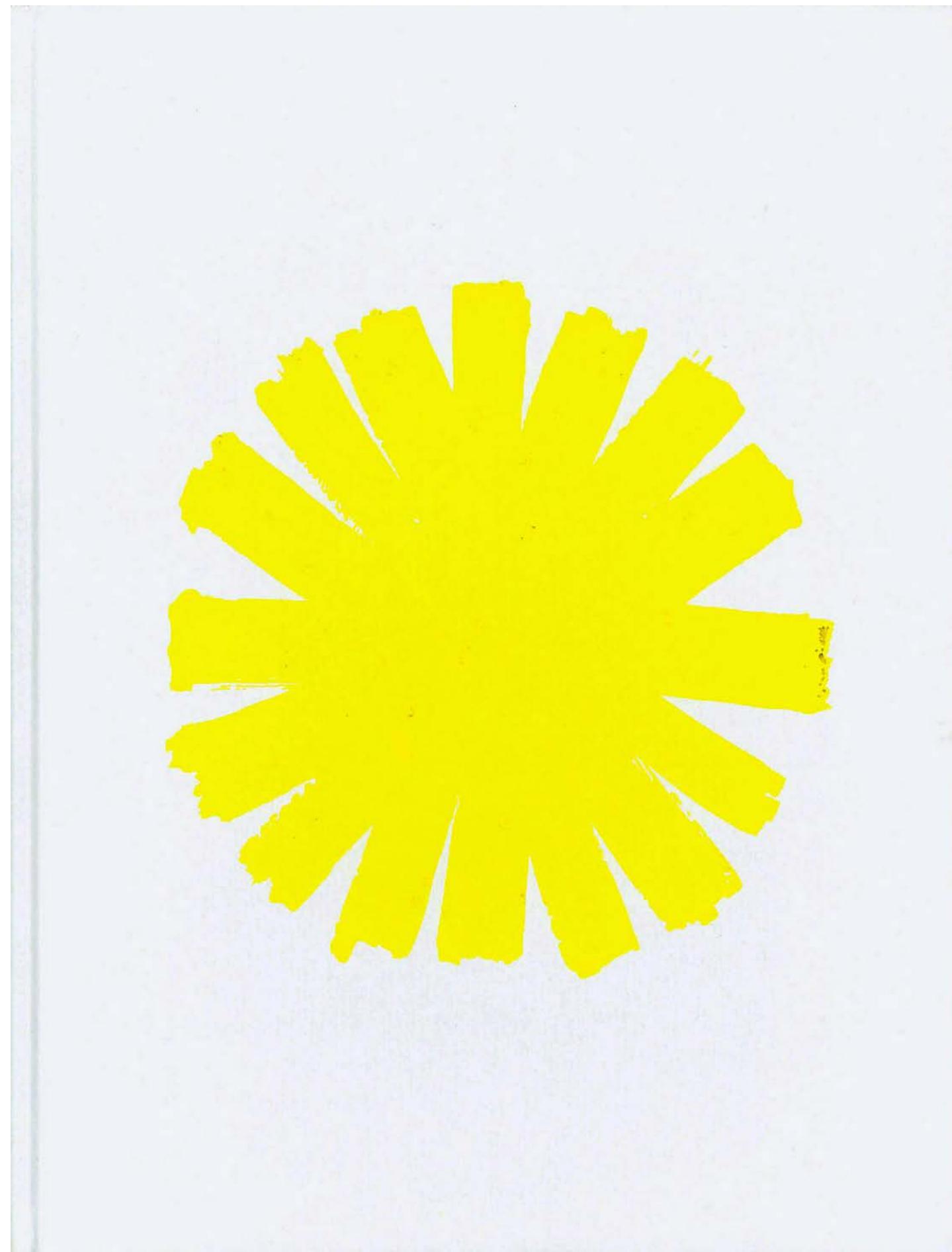
FINAL DAYS, 2019 — Philipville is a city of the near future where the connective tissue of society is fruice, the protoplasm of a planned obsolescence economy. As a Christmas Day fruice shipment is unleashed on the semi-quiescent residents of the city, Revolution looms. Brifcor organizes the workers. Meanwhile, listening to disaster reports on Channel 23Ω, Cassandra has a vision — a new world glimpsed through a tear in the fabric of reality. Will there be Rapture or Revolution? And does history, like all stories, ultimately have an end?

\$14.20

2–9 November 2006
Project Arts Centre, Dublin
Published by Project Press, January 2007
ISBN 1 872493 21 1



"Hektor Meets Dexter Sinister" performance and wall mural with Jürg Lehni at Swiss Institute, New York (2007)



The Sun as Error, book designed and edited with Shannon Ebner for Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2009)

Whitney

Doublin, 7 January 2008

Dear cooperator,

I have taken the typewriter down from the stack of boxes in the backroom in order to guarantee a certain slowness and precision here. I'm after the formality that is so easily obliterated by more recent and ubiquitous technologies, and in this spirit I write to you -- one of a small community of convalescents -- in the hope of convincing you to participate in this not because you can or can't but because you care and will.*

From the 7th Regiment Armory building on Park Avenue in New York City -- a parallel site to the 2008 Whitney Biennial exhibition -- I aim to coordinate a series of PRESS RELEASES written by different people and issued through different distribution channels. My hope is that this will slow down, complicate, or at least draw out the reception of the exhibition. Given both the location and status -- at a vortex of critical mass -- the Whitney Biennial is immediately cannibalized by the media who surround it: reviews are typically written on the first day before the general public is invited, and each critic duty-bound to weigh in with their direct interpretations of the show. The result is that for most the exhibition is REviewed before it has even been viewed. As such, my interest is in the possibility of arranging another reading through these parallel press releases ... released neither under the umbrella of the Whitney Museum nor that of any known publication. What happens when information is released from within the show but not sanctioned by The Show? (It functions as a shadow.) (It functions as a mirror.)

Proof of the fact that a mechanical device can

Reproduce personality

And that Quality is merely

The distribution aspect of Quantity.

Journalists have conquered the book form;

Writing is now the tiny affair of the individual;

The customers have changed: television's aren't viewers, but advertisers; publishing's not potential readers, but distributors..

The result is rapid turnover,

The regime of the bestseller

But there will always be

A parallel circuit, a black market.

And so this letter is addressed to no one in particular, but specific to each of you for reasons I trust you understand. I suppose I am merely asking you to write as a (Wo)Man of the Crowd, a community that can still act, not because it is entitled to do so by the institutions of power, but by virtue of an unconditional exuberant politics of dedication (I quote.)

If you accept all this -- and the invitation -- you will contribute a reflective text to double as a press release. This could be a new text, an existing text, or not even a text at all. Furthermore, it might be produced remotely, or on-site with me at the Armory in the Commander's Room, a locked office accessed by a secret panel release from the Colonel's Ballroom. Your press will then be released during the three weeks following the opening of the exhibition, with the channel of distribution -- fax, word-of-mouth, trumpet, parachute etc. -- directly determined by the contents of its message. Normal press releases are, of course, typically compressed into a series of literal sound bites on a single sheet of paper and designed to be easily re-purposed -- copied, pasted, combined and inserted back into other media streams. This model might as well be our point of departure too.

I hope that my formula of 'disinterredness plus admiration' will seduce you (I I I I I I I quote) and that the various non-textual qualities of this missive fill in some of the gaps in explanation. If so, we ought to continue this discussion by email or telephone (see below). Please try to get in touch within the next week.

For now,

Dexter Sinister

Dexter Sinister
38 Ludlow Street (basement south), New York, NY 10002, USA
Tel: +1 213 235 6296 / Email: info@dextersinister.org

* And what do you do? You just SIT there. (I quote)

ПИТИНЕР

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 4 MARCH 2008

As the first of a series of reflections on the 2008 Whitney Biennial, Dexter Sinister has staged a rotating spotlight near the entrance to the Whitney Museum of Art (Madison Avenue at 75th Street), marking the parallel site of the exhibition. This will be present during the opening nights of Tuesday 4 March and Wednesday 5 March only, operating from 7pm onwards.

Following the detailed proposal described by Margaret Wertheim of the Institute for Figuring in her New York Times Op-Ed piece of Wednesday 20 June 2007 (overleaf), this klieg light will cast a giant shadow into the New York City sky. To quote:

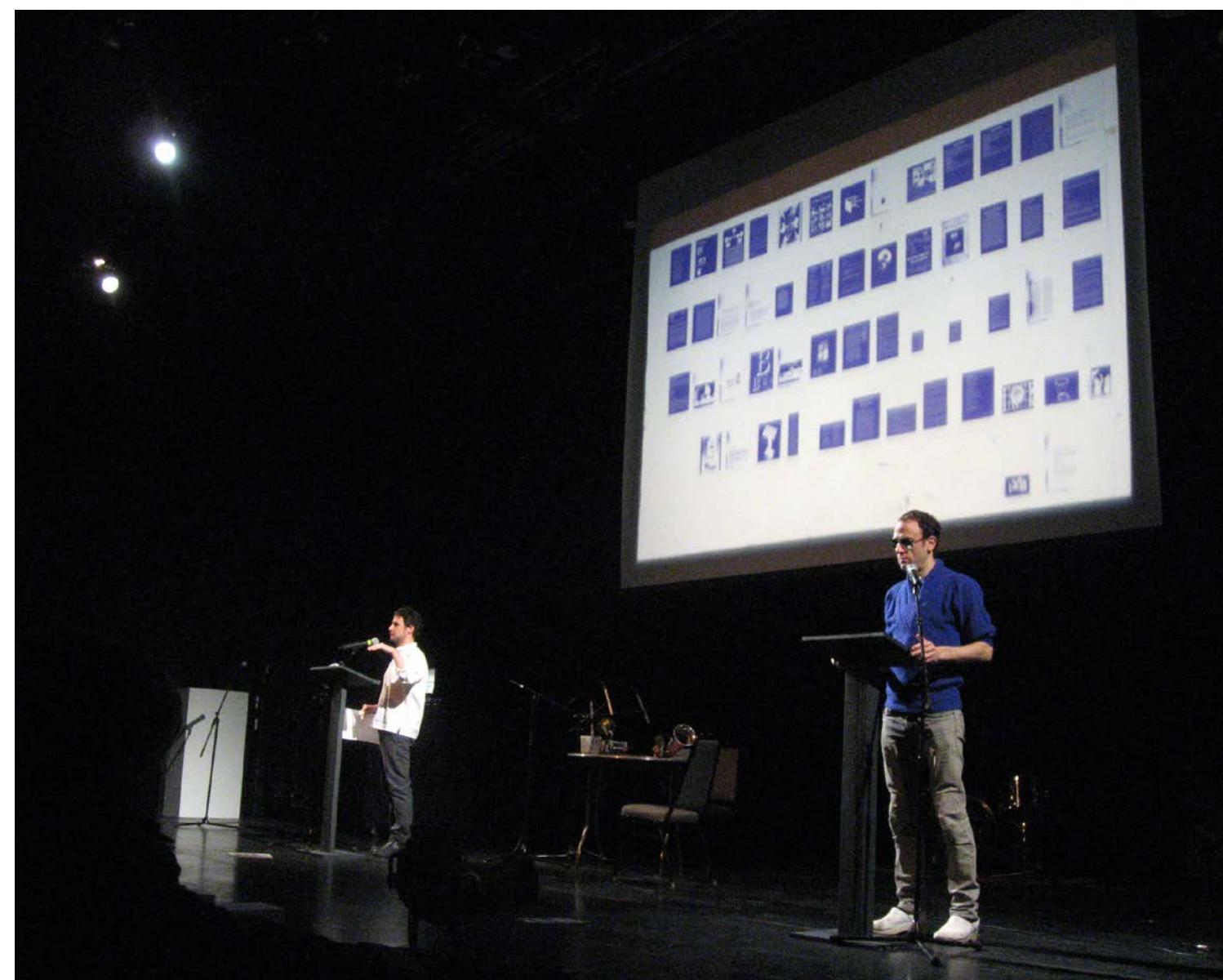
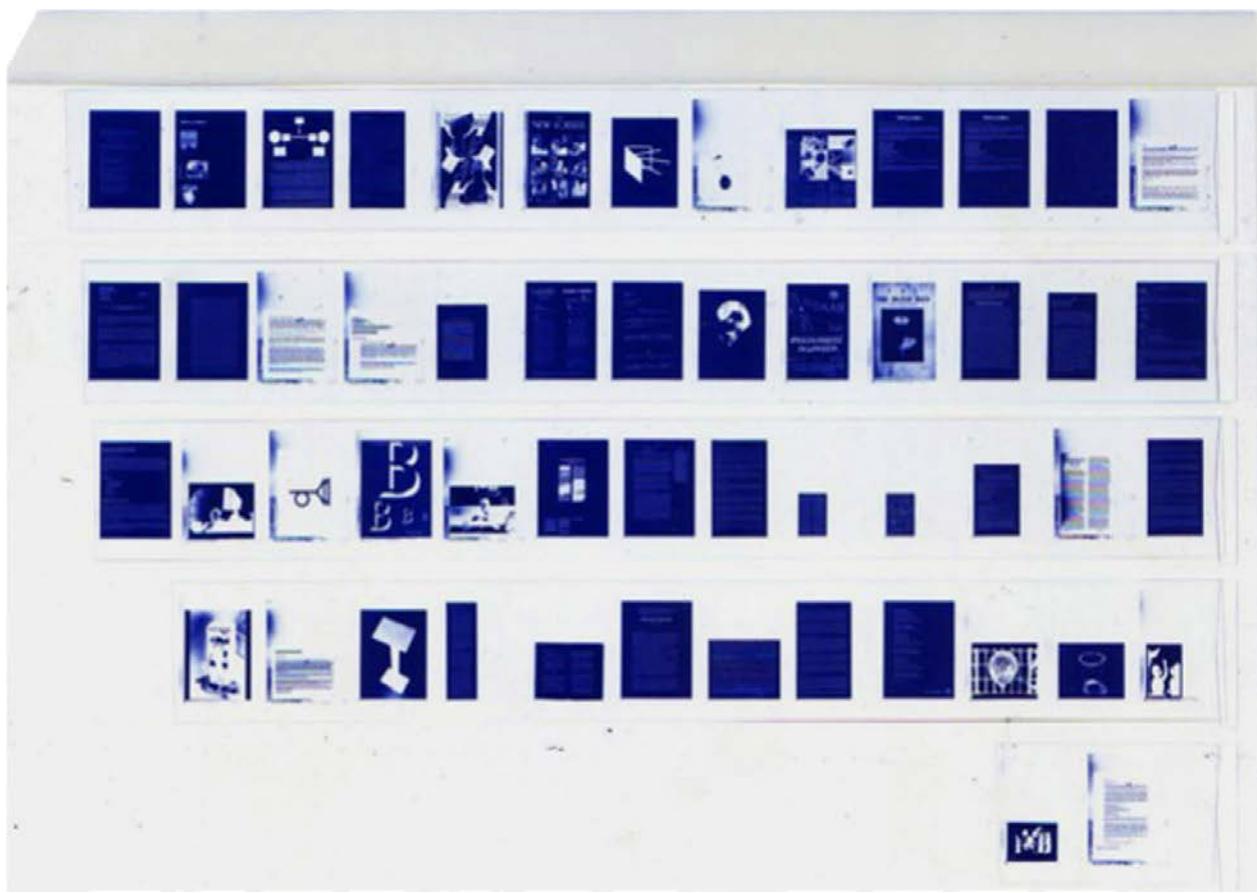
It's quite easy to conjure
A faster-than-light shadow
(Or in theory, at least):
Build a great klieg light,
A superstrong version
Of the ones at the Academy Awards.
Now paste a piece of black paper
Onto the klieg's glass

130

So there's a shadow in the middle of the beam.

(In this case, the shadow image will be formed by the inverted Whitney graphic (above) adhered to the surface of the light.)

During the following three weeks (4 March – 23 March) while the Armory building operates as an auxillary location for the exhibition, Dexter Sinister will continue to produce and release a number of commissioned 'texts' by various co-operators in various media.



True Mirror Microfiche Postscript, performance by Dexter Sinister with extended cast at The Kitchen, NY and ICA, London (2009–10)



The First/Last Newspaper (2009)

4. Dexter Sinister

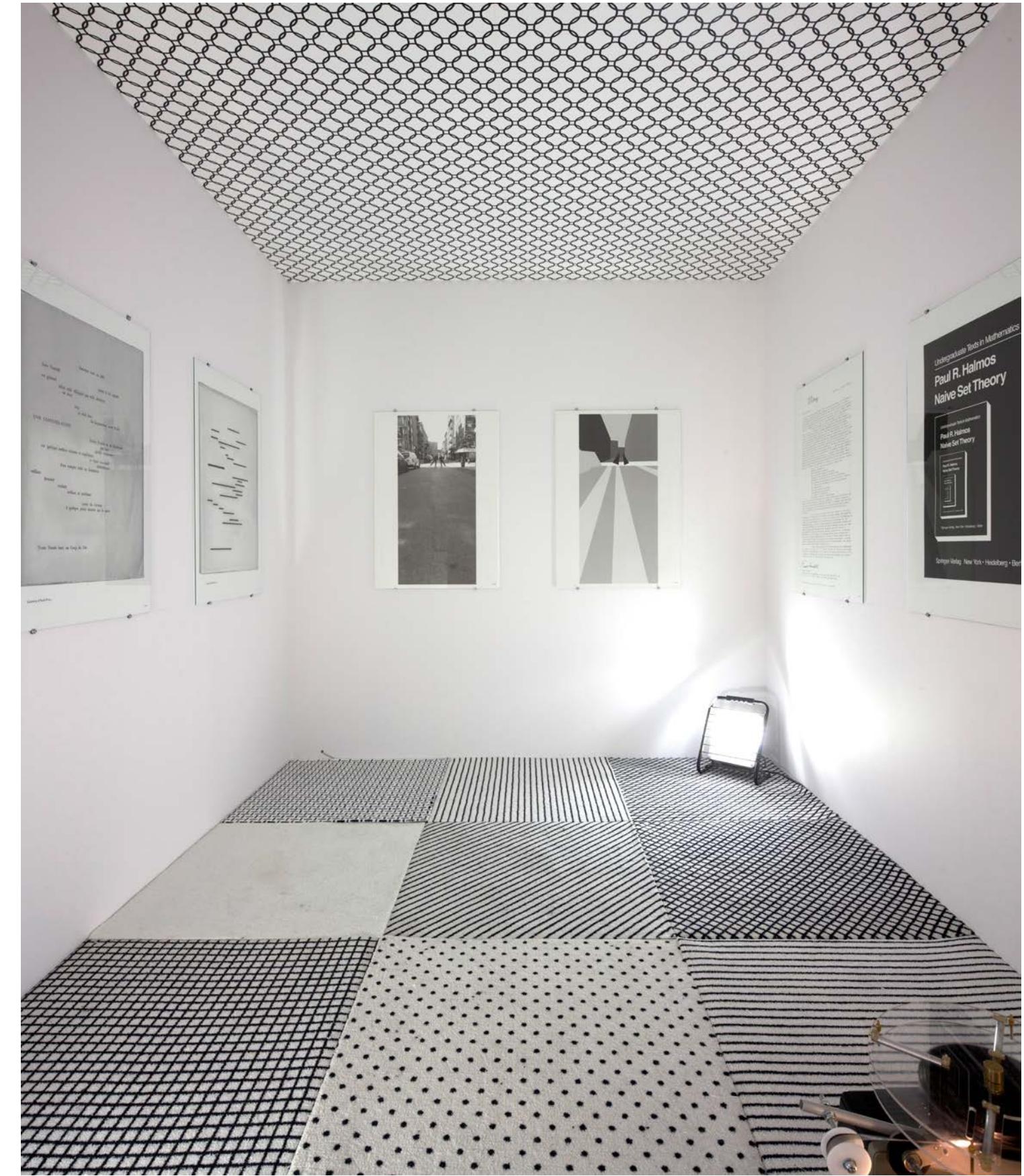


4. Dexter Sinister





"Identity" 3-screen video projection around graphic identity and arts institutions, Dexter Sinister at Artists Space, New York (2011)

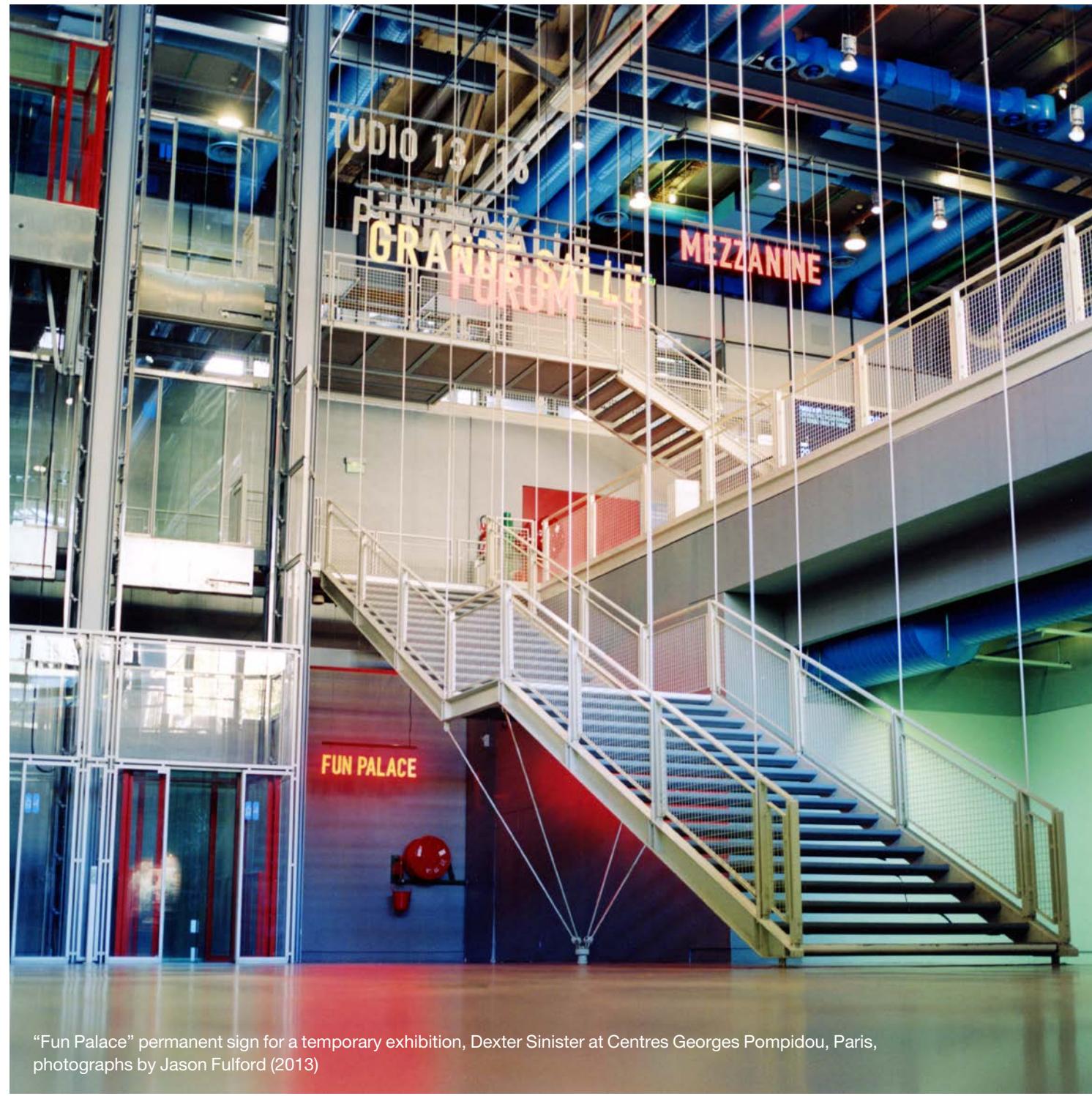


"Dexter Bang Sinister" exhibition with Lars Bang Larsen and Angie Keefer at Kunsthall Charlottenberg, Copenhagen (2012)

4. Dexter Sinister



Watch Wyoscan 0.5 Hz, digital watch with custom electronics that slow down the display, Dexter Sinister for Halmos,
photograph by Jason Fulford (2012)



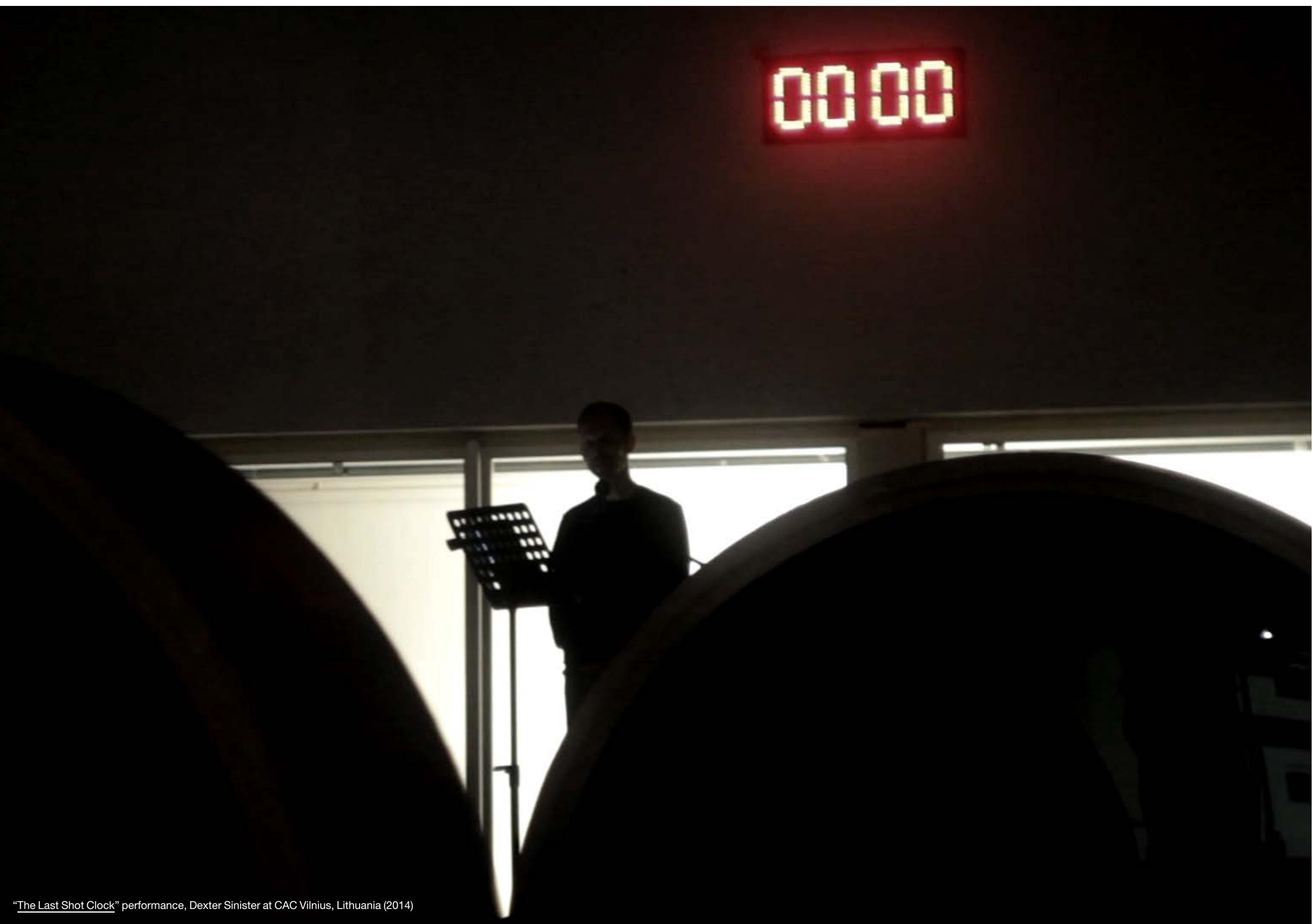


Work-in-Progress, custom chips for electronic scoreboard, Dexter Sinister at Lithuanian Pavilion, Biennale di Venezia (2013)

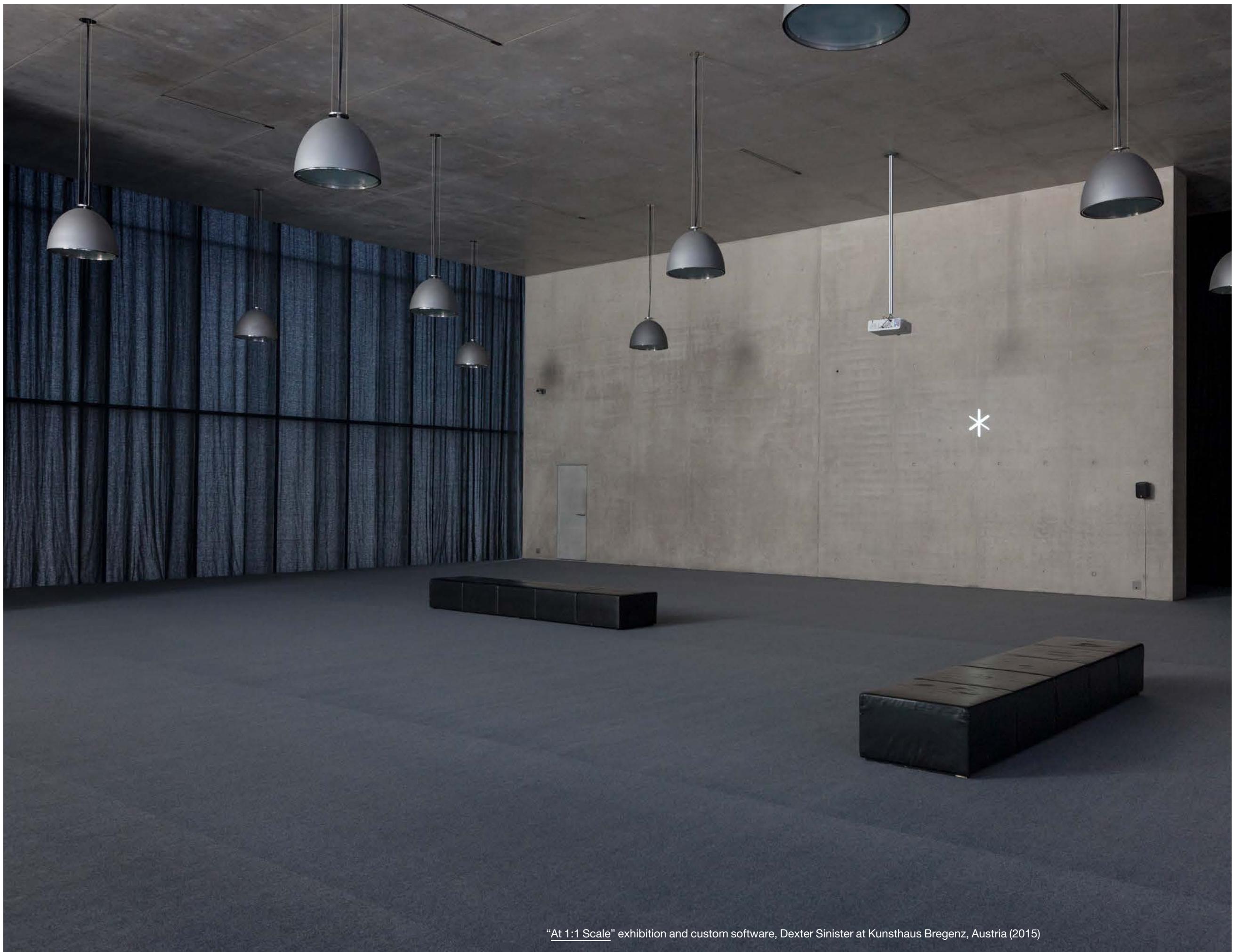


Work-in-Progress, modified scoreboard with custom electronics that alters the display of time replacing numeric digits with a limited alphabet of "O" and "o" and a concise 16-frame pattern to signal the exhibition title "Oo," Dexter Sinister at Lithuanian Pavilion, Biennale di Venezia (2013)





"The Last Shot Clock" performance, Dexter Sinister at CAC Vilnius, Lithuania (2014)



"At 1:1 Scale" exhibition and custom software, Dexter Sinister at Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria (2015)

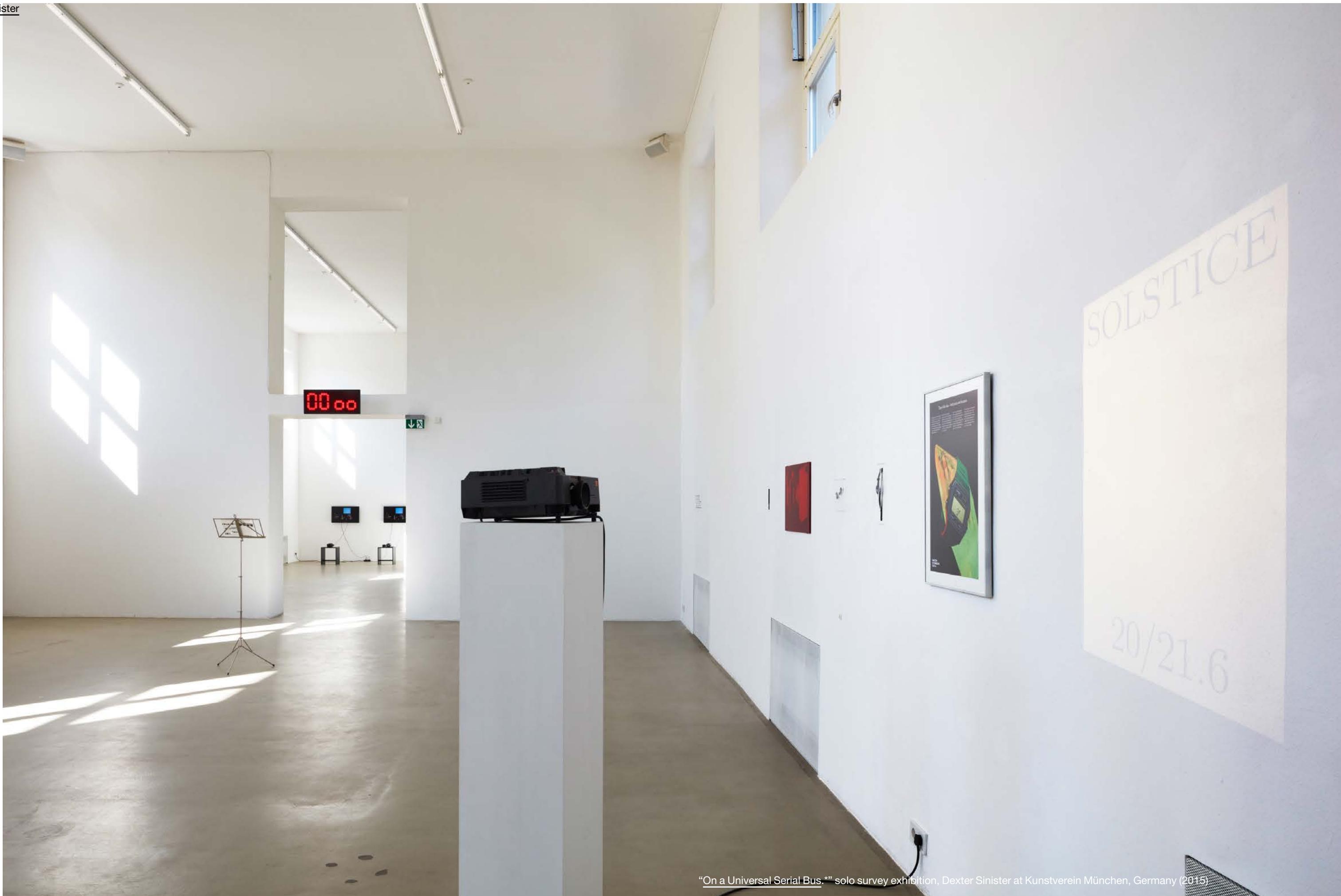
El orden natural de las cosas*



4. Dexter Sinister



"On a Universal Serial Bus.*" solo survey exhibition catalog on USB drive, Dexter Sinister at Kunstverein München, Germany (2015)



"On a Universal Serial Bus.**" solo survey exhibition, Dexter Sinister at Kunstverein München, Germany (2015)

4. Dexter Sinister



"Universal Serial Bus (Port)" 7x10m flag for the port of Ghent, Dexter Sinister with 019, Ghent, Belgium (2016)

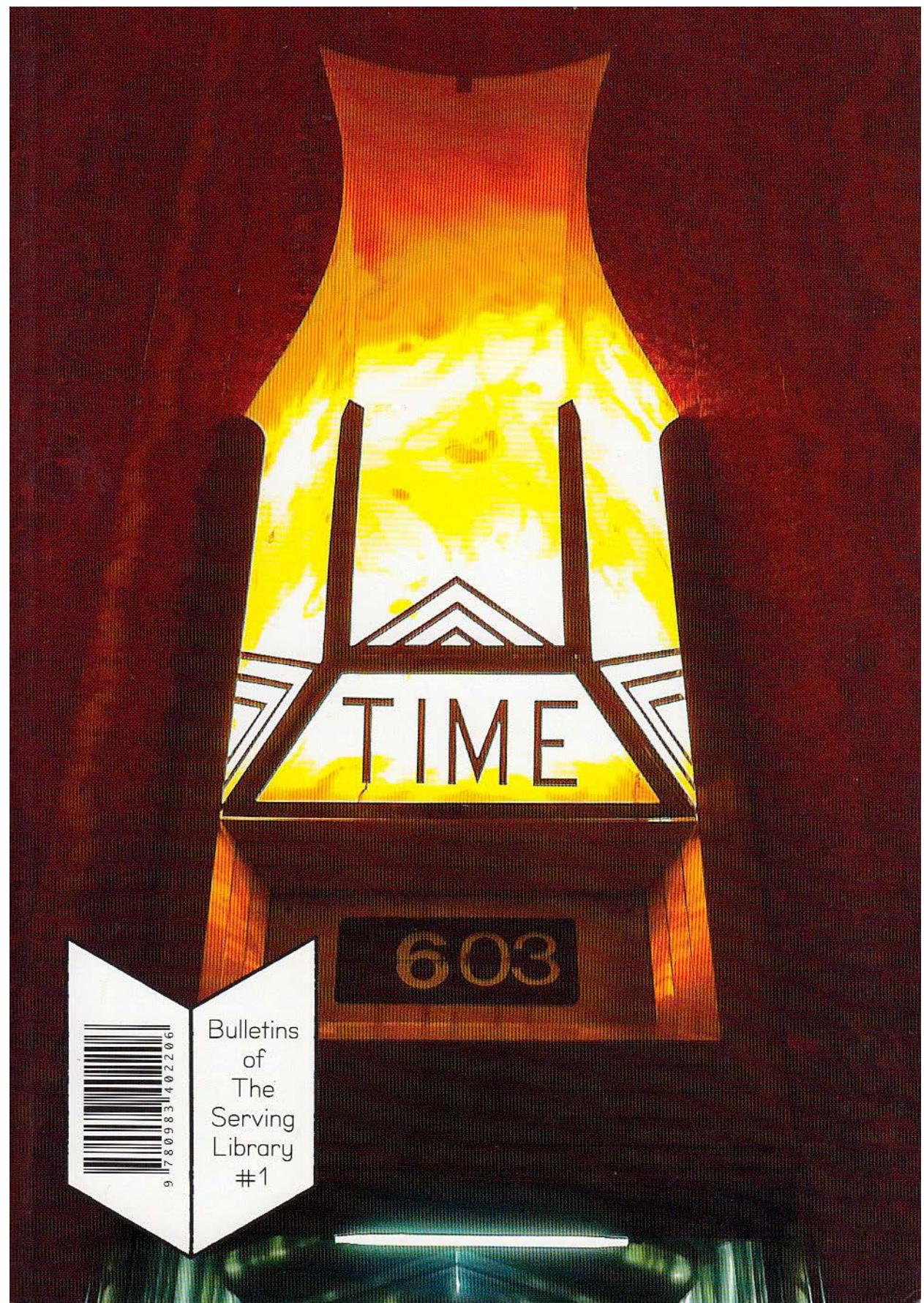
5. The Serving Library

The Serving Library is a cooperatively-built archive that assembles itself by publishing. It consists of 1. an ambitious public website; 2. a collection of artifacts and artworks; 3. a publishing program which runs through #1 and #2. The Serving Library Company, Inc. is a non-profit organization in the state of New York co-founded by Angie Keefer, Stuart Bertolotti-Bailey, and David Reinfurt. Curator Francesca Bertolotti-Bailey joined the project in 2015 and novelist Vincenzo Latronico joined in 2018

Currently, the project consists of a central website which releases commissioned texts as bite-sized “bulletin” PDFs for free download; as an archive of framed objects and bound books, and as a printed journal produced by Roma Publications. The Serving Library collection has been shown in art venues around the world over the last 10 years including Tate Liverpool, Banff Centre, Artists Space, Nottingham Contemporary, Lyon Biennial, Kunstverein Amsterdam, Kunstverein München, Liverpool Biennial, and HEAD Geneva. In June 2020, The collection begins a 5-year residency at 019, Ghent, Belgium.

As a non-profit publishing institution that both sells a hard-copy printed journal and also offers all of its content for free online, The Serving Library has been at the front of examining the overlaps between online and print publication, establishing a stable and funded economy which commissions new writing, pays above WAGE-standard fees to its contributors, and works with an explicitly diverse collection of writers and contributors to produce a sustainable and ethical art and design publishing ecology.

<http://www.servinglibrary.org>





Left: Bulletins of The Serving Library #1 journal, back cover. Above: The Serving Library [website](#) (2010)

5. The Serving Library

Introduction — Publication / Programs / Collection

2018 JAN 22 2:55:55 PM

Bruce Sterling: THE LIFE AND DEATH OF MEDIA

Listen to the following, all you digital hipsters. This is Jacqueline Goddard speaking in January 1995. Jacqueline was born in 1911, and she was one of the 20th century's great icons of bohemian femininity. Man Ray photographed her in Paris in 1930, and if we can manage it without being sued by the Juliet Man Ray Trust, we're gonna put brother Man Ray's knock-you-down-and-stomp-you-gorgeous image of Jacqueline up on our vaporware Website someday. She may be the patron saint of this effort.

[Download PDF](#)

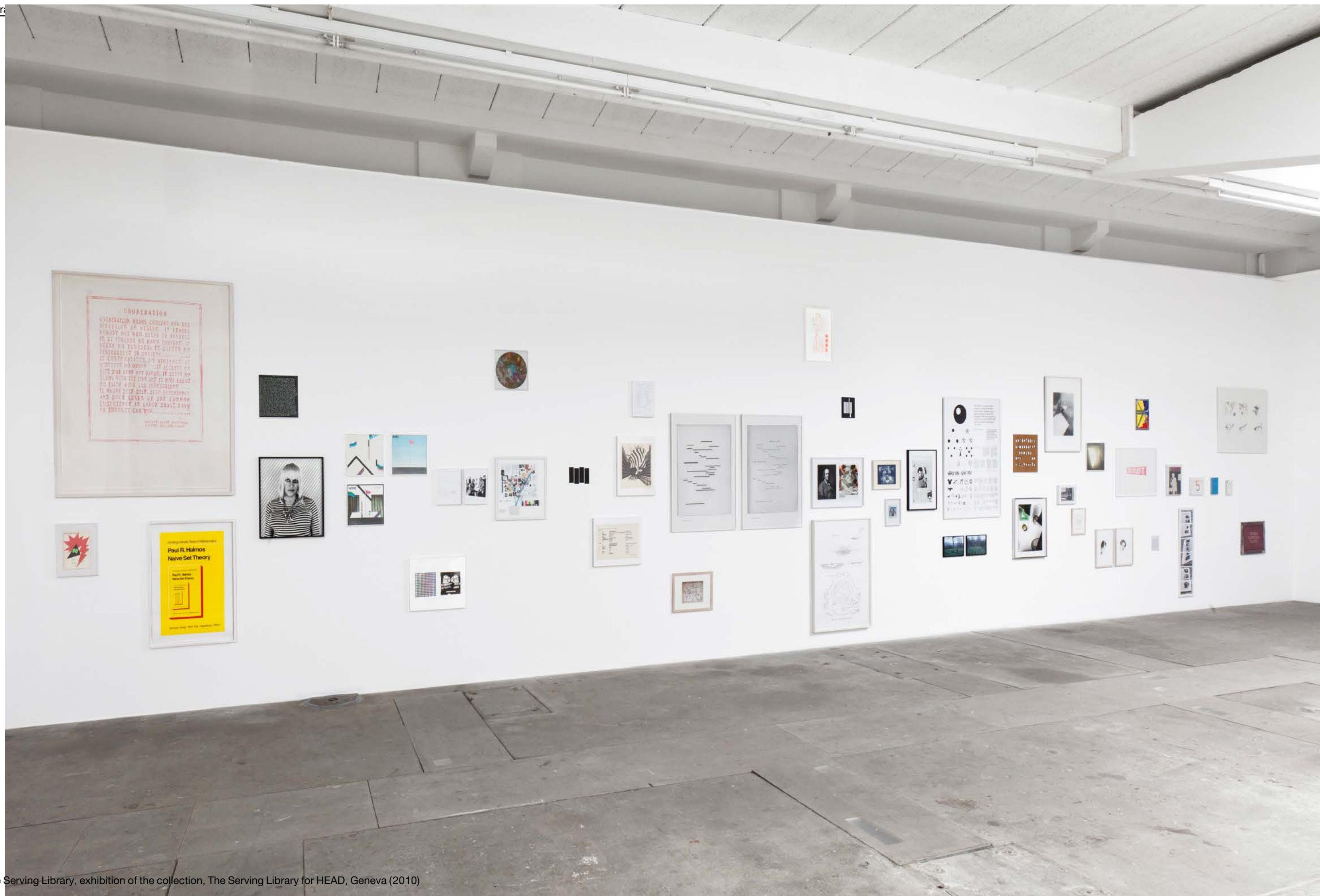
The-Life-and-Death-of-Media.pdf (page 1 of 16)

BoTSL #1 2018 JAN 22 2:56 PM

Introduction — Publication / Programs / Collection

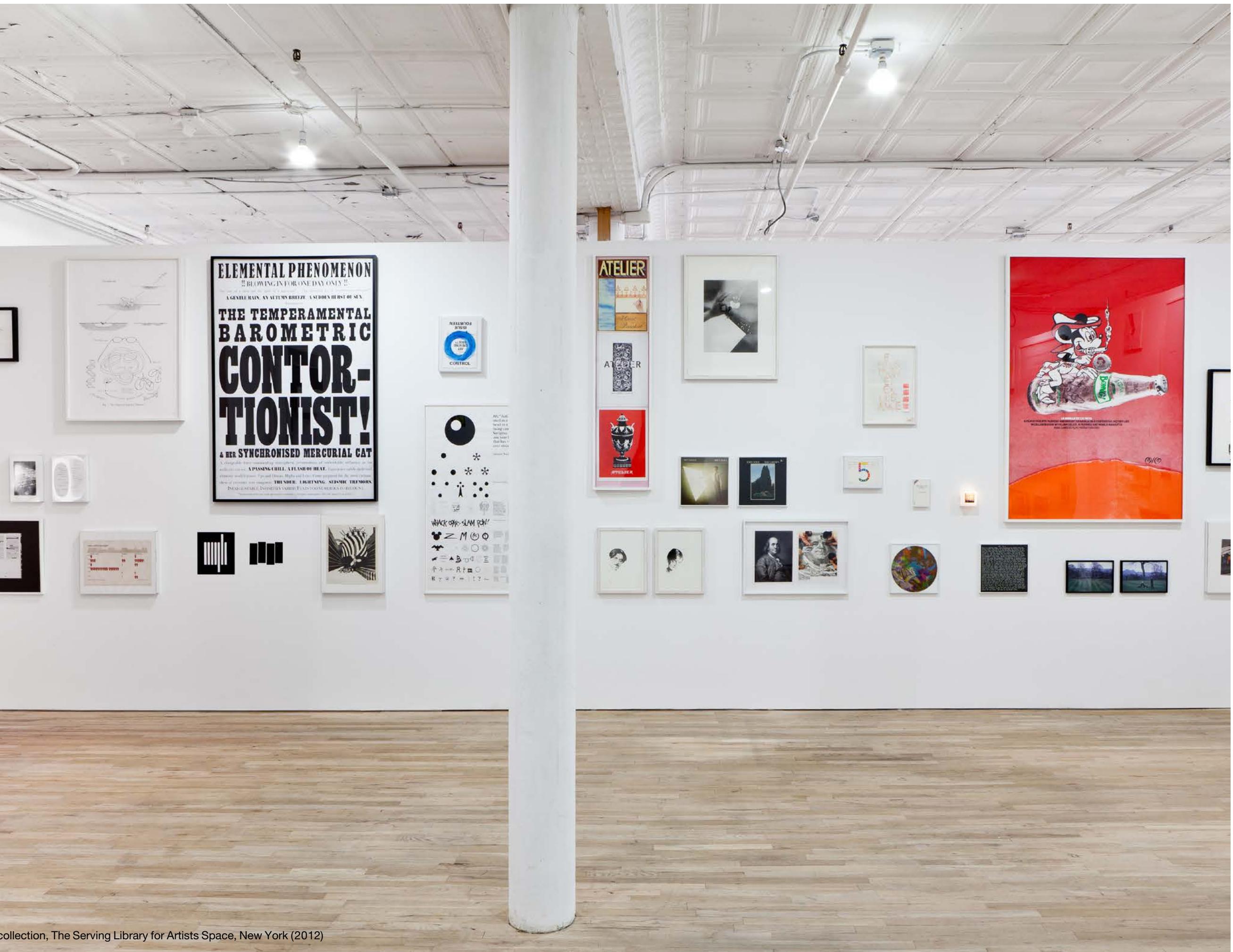
* Recently Served *

Jack Self: REAL-REVIEW by 78.139.6.123 at 2018 JAN 23 1:32 AM
Rob Giampietro: I-AM-A-HANDLE by 136.24.49.213 at 2018 JAN 23 1:26 AM
Abigail Reynolds: LOST-LIBRARIES by 104.162.126.66 at 2018 JAN 23 1:18 AM
Anne Carson: NELL by 74.91.29.68 at 2018 JAN 22 11:03 PM
Anne Carson: NELL by 74.91.29.68 at 2018 JAN 22 11:01 PM
Anne Carson: NELL by 74.91.29.68 at 2018 JAN 22 11:00 PM
Junior Aspirin Records: AUDIO-ANNOTATIONS by 81.235.139.67 at 2018 JAN 22 10:46 PM
Francis McKee: FOR-X by 81.235.139.67 at 2018 JAN 22 10:45 PM
Philip Ording: A-DEFINITE-INTUITION by 81.235.139.67 at 2018 JAN 22 10:45 PM
: by 109.102.111.84 at 2018 JAN 22 7:23 PM
: by 174.192.28.146 at 2018 JAN 22 6:57 PM
: by 24.34.131.13 at 2018 JAN 22 6:57 PM
: by 24.34.131.13 at 2018 JAN 22 6:57 PM
Lucy Mulroney: I'D-RECOGNIZE-YOUR-VOICE-ANYWHERE by 24.34.131.13 at 2018 JAN 22 6:57 PM
Hilton Als: IN-BLACK-AND-WHITE by 73.165.77.219 at 2018 JAN 22 5:04 PM
Anne Carson: NELL by 108.21.58.96 at 2018 JAN 22 4:35 PM
Brian Eno: AXIS-THINKING by 92.109.1.80 at 2018 JAN 22 3:54 PM
Dexter Sinister: A-NOTE-ON-THE-TYPE by 69.202.192.24 at 2018 JAN 22 3:33 PM
Patrick Staff: SEIZURE by 73.110.37.250 at 2018 JAN 22 2:59 PM
Tauba Auerbach: P-E-R-S-E-V-E-R-E by 73.110.37.250 at 2018 JAN 22 2:58 PM
Bruce Sterling: THE-LIFE-AND-DEATH-OF-MEDIA by 69.202.192.24 at 2018 JAN 22 2:56 PM
Abigail Reynolds: LOST-LIBRARIES by 70.123.6.29 at 2018 JAN 22 2:21 PM
9mother9horse9eyes9: THE-INTERFACE-SERIES by 84.168.208.69 at 2018 JAN 22 1:37 PM
9mother9horse9eyes9: THE-INTERFACE-SERIES by 186.54.184.217 at 2018 JAN 22 1:18 PM
Umberto Eco: THE-COLORS-WE-SEE by 64.183.43.49 at 2018 JAN 22 12:41 PM
Angie Keefer: AN-OCTOPUS-IN-PLAN-VIEW by 145.24.232.230 at 2018 JAN 22 12:37 PM
Frances Stark: CENSORSHIP-NOW by 99.230.203.54 at 2018 JAN 22 12:05 PM
Kathy Acker: AGAINST-ORDINARY-LANGUAGE--THE-LANGUAGE-OF-THE-BODY by 73.219.140.168 at 2018 JAN 22 12:02 PM
: by 87.214.61.52 at 2018 JAN 22 11:04 AM
: by 87.214.61.52 at 2018 JAN 22 11:04 AM
9mother9horse9eyes9: THE-INTERFACE-SERIES by 90.92.89.80 at 2018 JAN 22 10:06 AM
Angie Keefer: FUTURES by 100.38.26.230 at 2018 JAN 22 9:22 AM
: by 87.214.61.52 at 2018 JAN 22 8:23 AM
: by 87.214.61.52 at 2018 JAN 22 8:23 AM
Hilton Als: IN-BLACK-AND-WHITE by 87.77.223.244 at 2018 JAN 22 7:50 AM
Anthony Huberman: HOW-TO-BEHAVE-BETTER by 194.81.29.169 at 2018 JAN 22 7:34 AM
Patrick Staff: SEIZURE by 193.137.236.185 at 2018 JAN 22 5:14 AM
Angie Keefer: AN-OCTOPUS-IN-PLAN-VIEW by 145.24.232.46 at 2018 JAN 22 4:08 AM
David Reinfurt: G-E-S-T-A-L-T by 130.233.16.30 at 2018 JAN 22 3:53 AM
Abigail Reynolds: LOST-LIBRARIES by 158.181.73.65 at 2018 JAN 22 3:01 AM
Stuart Bailey: PROCEDURAL by 1.215.241.90 at 2018 JAN 22 12:24 AM
Kathy Acker: AGAINST-ORDINARY-LANGUAGE--THE-LANGUAGE-OF-THE-BODY by 148.75.67.115 at 2018 JAN 21 10:13 PM



A Model of The Serving Library, exhibition of the collection, The Serving Library for HEAD, Geneva (2010)

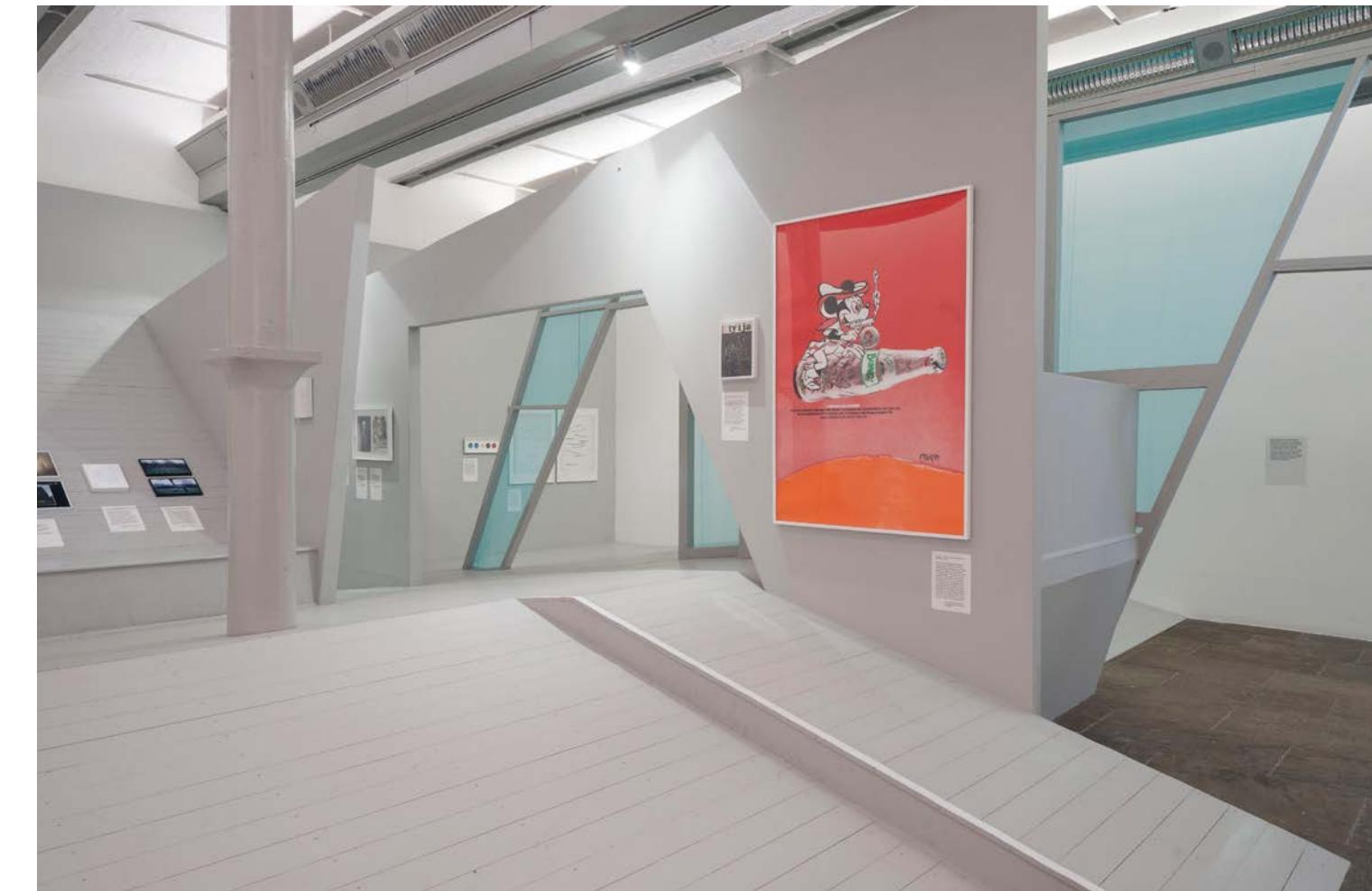
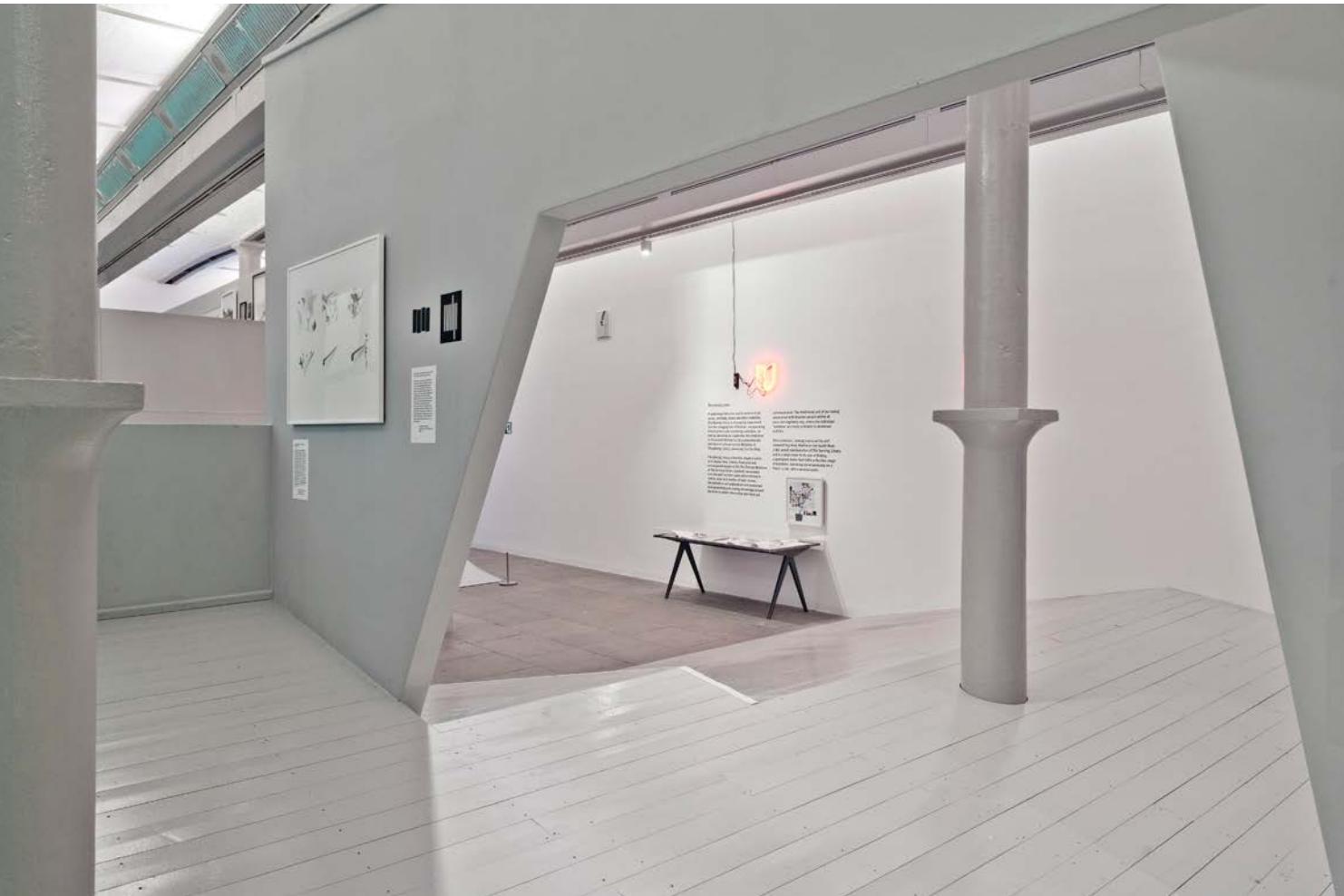
5. The Serving Library



A Model of The Serving Library, exhibition of the °collection, The Serving Library for Artists Space, New York (2012)



A Model of The Serving Library, exhibition of the collection, The Serving Library for Banff Arts Centre, Banff (2012)

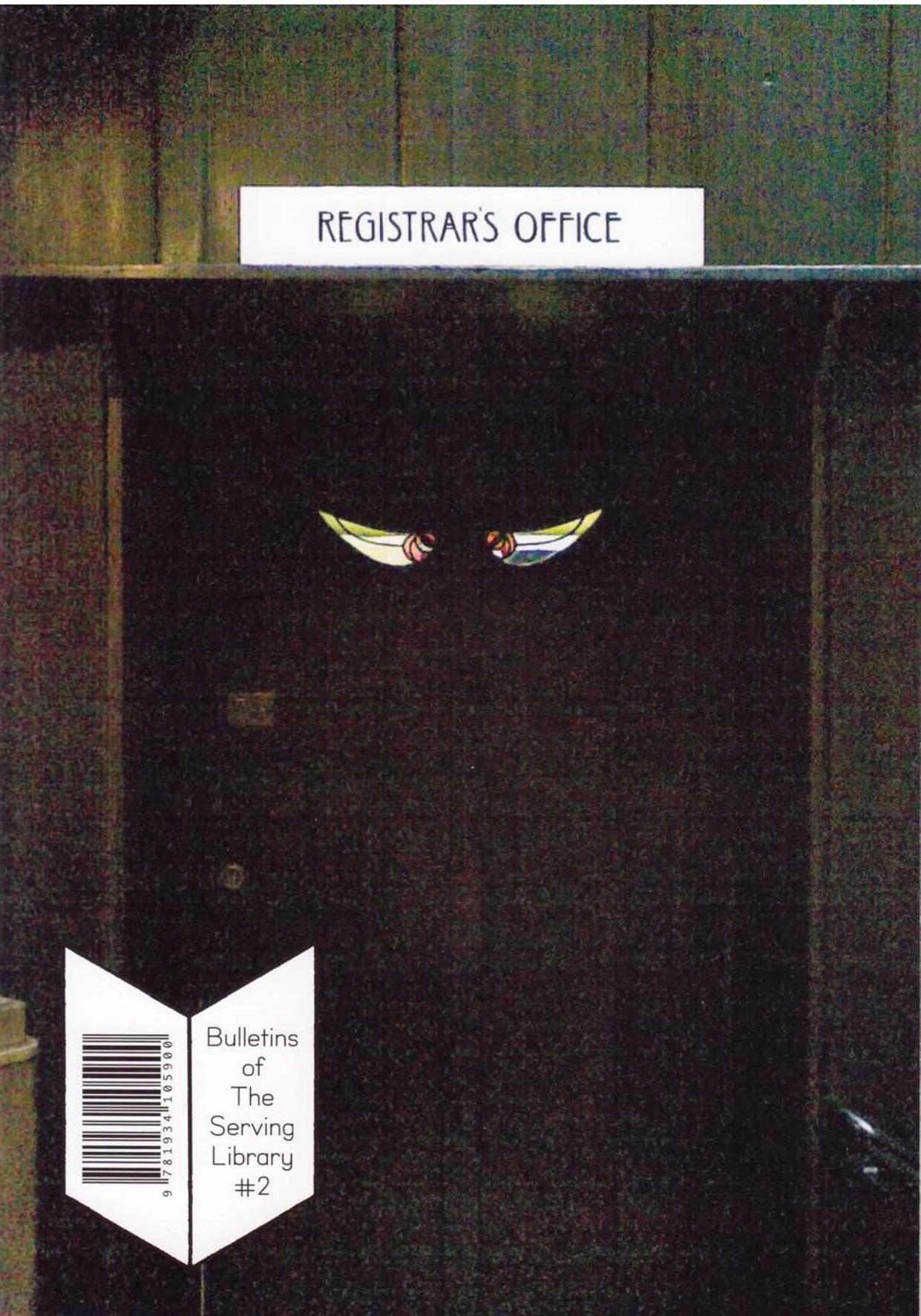


A Model of The Serving Library, exhibition of the collection, architecture by Claude Parent, Tate Liverpool (2014)

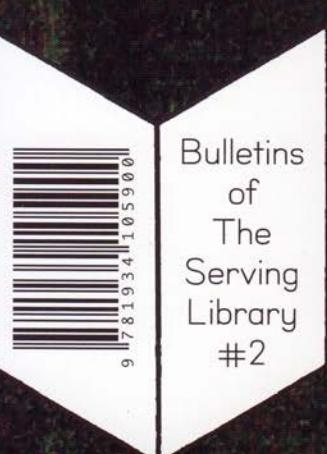


Trailer for an Exhibition Catalog animated video, Dexter Sinister in "Ecstatic Alphabets," Museum of Modern Art (2012)

Bulletins of The Serving Library #3 journal, published as the exhibition catalog for "Ecstatic Alphabets," Museum of Modern Art (2012)



REGISTRAR'S OFFICE



Bulletins of The Serving Library #2 journal (2011)



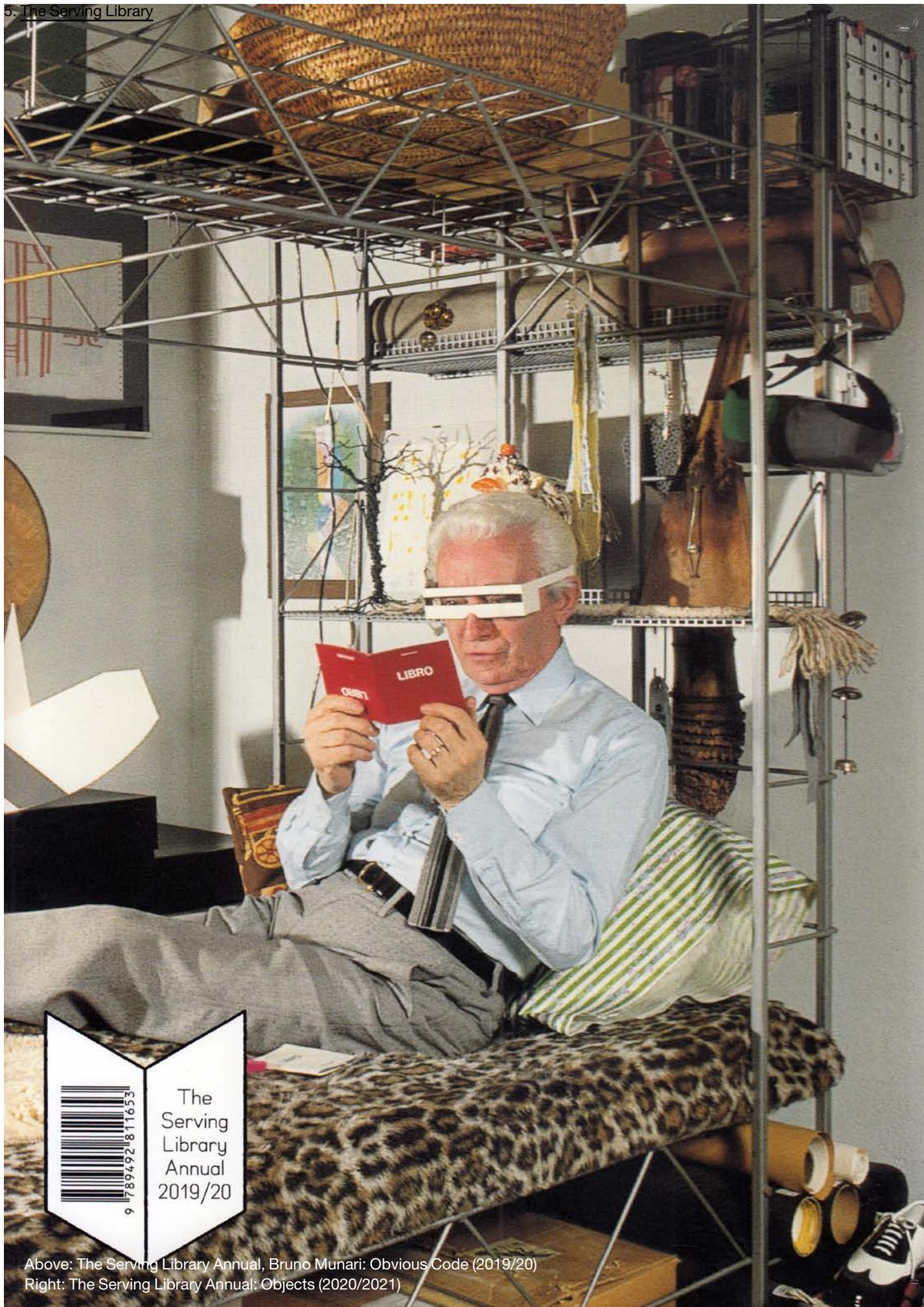
Bulletins of The Serving Library #4 journal (2012)



Above: Bulletins of The Serving Library #7 journal (2013)
Right: The Serving Library Annual journal (2017/18)



5. The Serving Library



The
Serving
Library
Annual
2019/20

9 789492 811653

Above: The Serving Library Annual, Bruno Munari: Obvious Code (2019/20)

Right: The Serving Library Annual: Objects (2020/21)



The
Serving
Library
Annual
2020/21

9 789492 811820

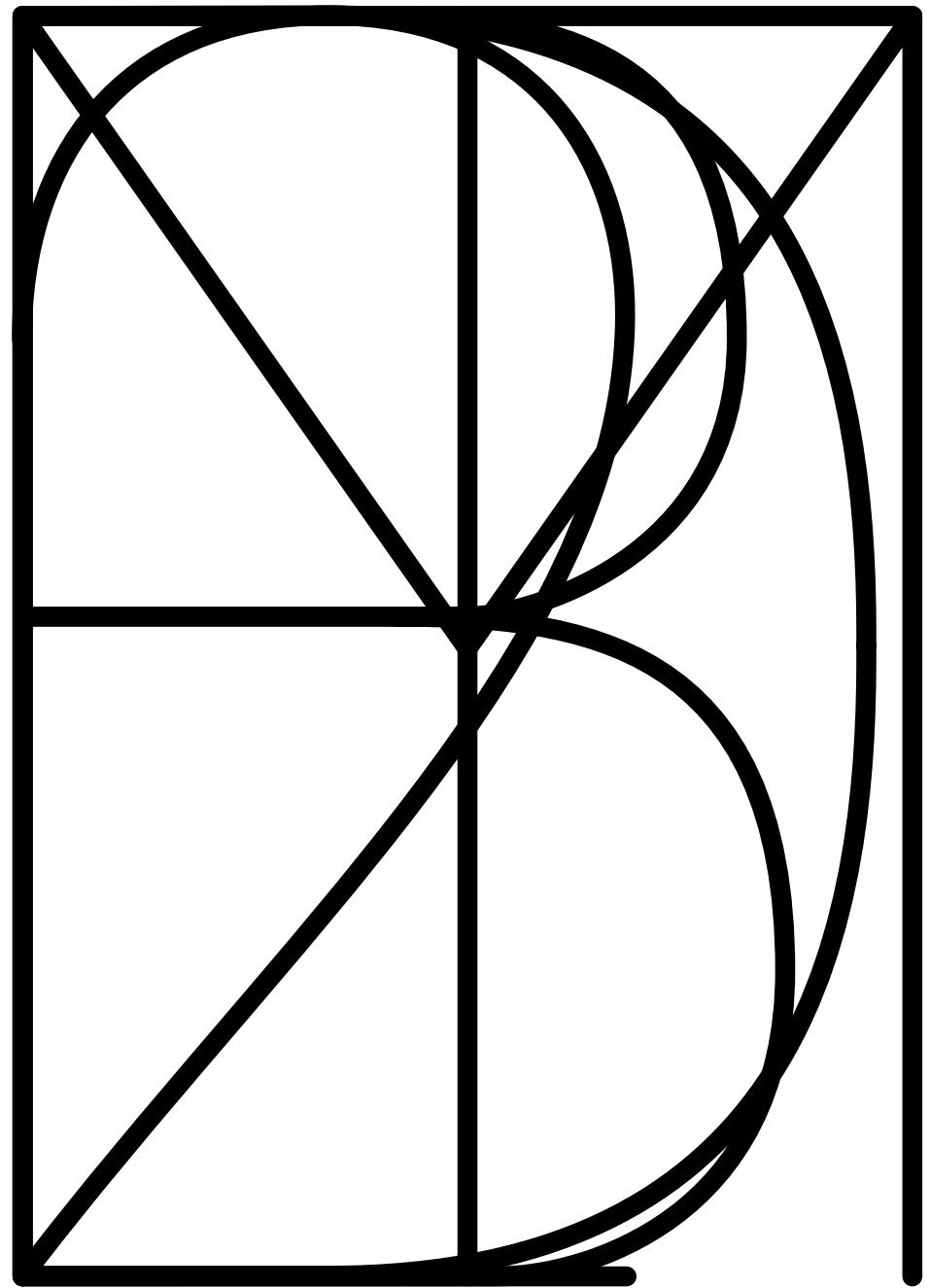
6. Meta-the-difference-between-the-two-font

Meta-the-difference-between-the-two-font is a custom software based on a previous digital typography tool called Metafont. Designed by Stanford computer science professor Donald Knuth in 1979 with typographic consulting from Herman Zapf, Metafont operates with the underlying idea of a typographic skeleton for each letter which is traced by a software pen to produce a nearly infinite series of fonts whose essential DNA is equivalent even while their outer forms are varied. Metafont was complicated to use and so never widely embraced. In the meantime, the software had fallen into neglect and disrepair.

Dexter Sinister's Meta-the-difference-between-the-two-font updates Knuth's Metafont to run on contemporary computers and outputs standard outline font formats. The new version also offers new geometry for the fundamental lettershapes and fully parameterizes control to allow the fonts to change, morph, and animate gracefully over time.

Part research, part digital archaeology, part practical typeface design, this work has been widely received in the overlapping circles of typography, software, and art where it has inspired a series of related projects which extend the original.





BoTSL #1 2018 JAN 22 3:33 PM

PEN = 0, 1, 1, 0, WEIGHT = 100, SLANT = 0, SUPERNESS = 0.75,
CURLYNESSE = 0:

This is Meta-the-difference-between-the-two-Font, a typeface designed by Dexter Sinister in 2010, and derived using MetaFont, the now-thirty-year-old computer typography system programmed by Donald Knuth in 1979.

MetaFont is both a programming language and its own interpreter, a swift trick where it first provides a vocabulary and then decodes its syntax back to the native binary machine language of 1s and 0s. Knuth originally intended MetaFont as a helper application for TeX, the computer typesetting system he created to facilitate high-quality typography directly by authors. Donald Knuth, a Stanford professor and author of the multi-volume computer science “Bible” *The Art of Computer Programming* (1971), was dismayed on receiving galley proofs for the second edition of his book. The publisher had just switched from traditional hot metal typesetting to a digital system and the typographic quality was far worse than the original 1971 edition. Knuth figured that setting letters on a page was simply a matter of ink or no-ink, on or off, 1 or 0, and therefore a perfect problem for the computer. He planned on spending a six-month sabbatical writing a typesetting program and produced (almost 10 years later) the near-ubiquitous (in mathematics and science publishing, anyway) computer typesetting program, TeX. MetaFont was designed from the start as TeX’s manual assistant and faithful servant, producing as required the high-quality fonts at whatever size and shape on command.

MetaFont was also intended as a tool for designing new typefaces on its own. As MetaFont was programmed by Knuth, a mathematician, the resulting typographic design method relies on equations (multi-variable algebra and a bit of vector arithmetic) to specify letterforms and computer code to compile these instructions into a usable font—all of which is more the native province of mathematicians than type designers.

In the American Mathematical Society’s prestigious Josiah Willard Gibbs Lecture of July 4, 1978, Knuth gave a talk titled “Mathematical Typography,” and suggested that, “We may conclude that a mathematical approach to the design of alphabets does not eliminate the artists who

have been doing the job for so many years.” True enough, but the relatively steep technical slope of using MetaFont for type designers combined with the limited interest in making typefaces by mathematicians has resulted in only several handfuls of MetaFonts being produced over the last thirty years. As such, scant documentation and support exists for someone trying to create a MetaFont today.

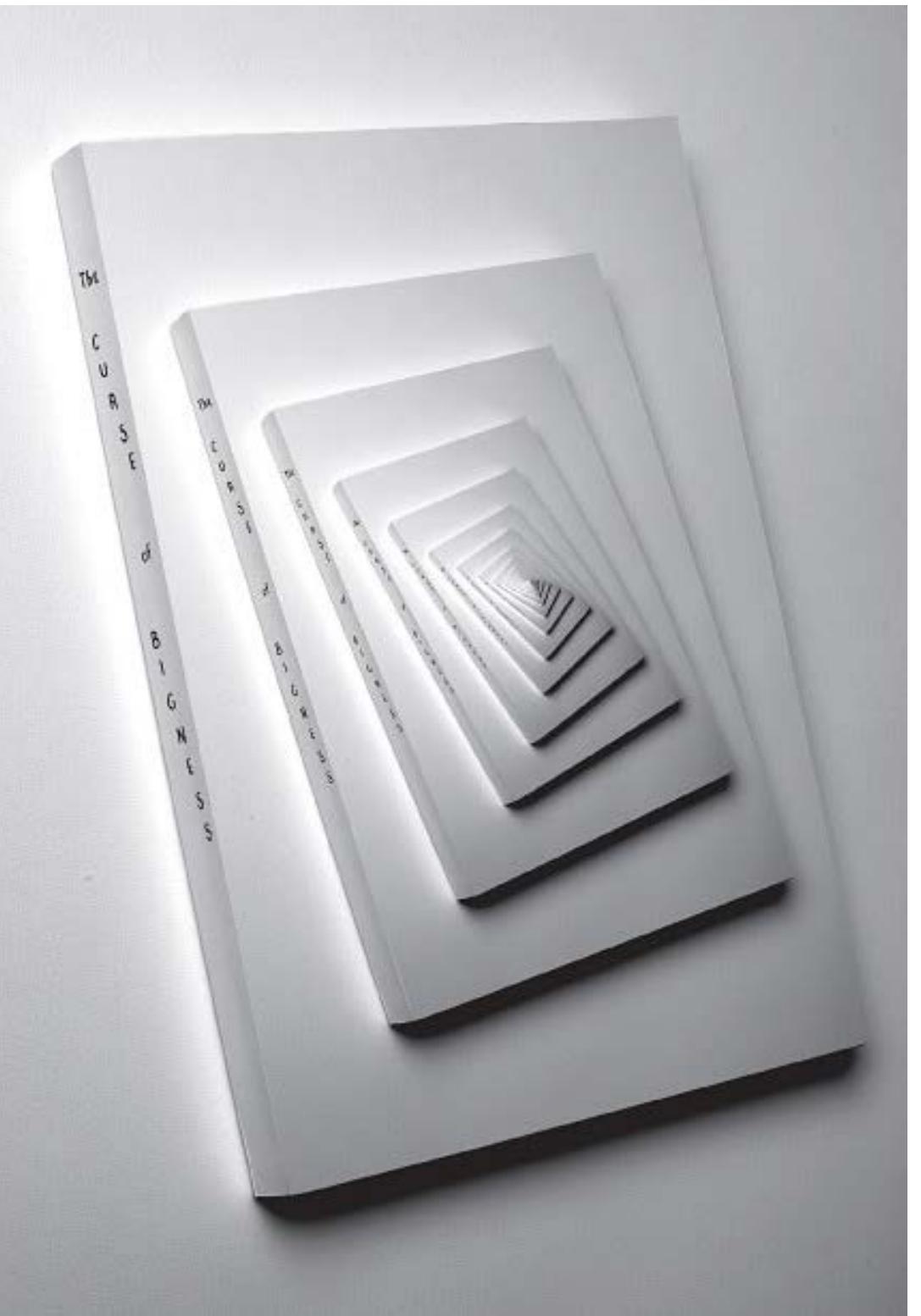
OK, let’s change the parameters of what you have been reading by setting the following excerpt from a lecture by Bruno Latour titled “What is the Style of Matters of Concern?” (2005) in Meta-the-difference-between-the-two-Font with PEN = 0, 1, 1, 30, WEIGHT = 25, SLANT = -0.1, SUPERNESS = 0.75, CURLYNESSE = 30. Like so:

Imagine the following scene: you are trying to build a bridge over a rather tumultuous river. Let’s say that one bank of this river is the “social” and the other, far away, inaccessible, separated by a violent current, by many eddies and dangerous rapids, is the “natural.” Now suppose that, instead of trying to cross this river and build this bridge, you decide instead to GO WITH THE FLOW, that is, to get involved in a bit of canoeing, kayaking or rafting. Then the absence of a bridge is not such a problem. What counts is your ability to equip yourself with the right paraphernalia so that you can go down the river without drowning yourself. You might be scared to get into the turbulent river, you might regret the task of bridge building, but you will probably agree that the two riverbanks are bound to look rather different once you apprehend both of them from the point of view of such a kayaking movement forward. This flowing lateral direction, turned at 90° from the obsessive question of bridge building, is, if I am not mistaken, what William James has called “pure experience.”

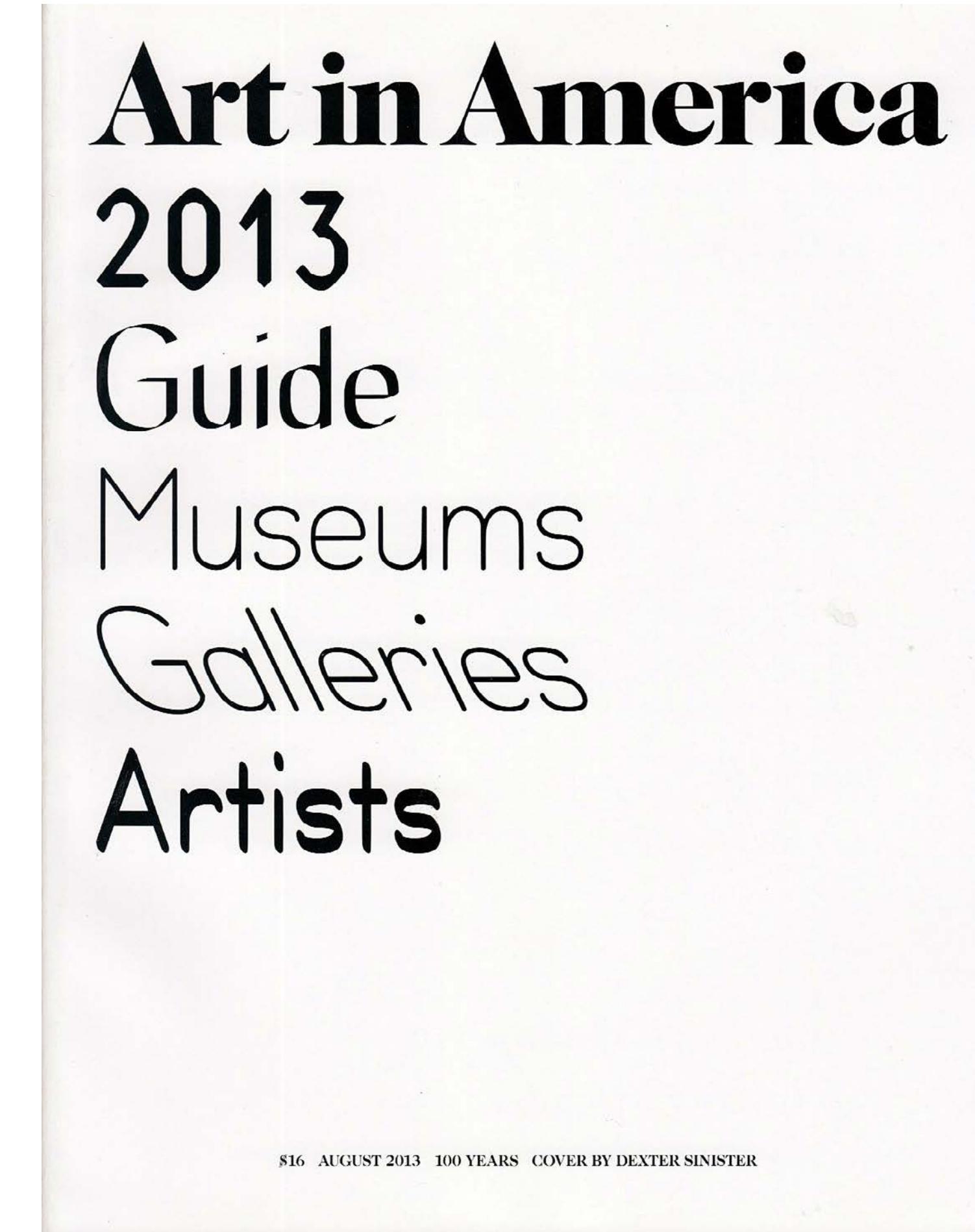
What I invite you to participate in is a little bout of kayaking, or rafting—and also, I am afraid, a bit of drifting. My question is: what will happen if, instead of trying to bridge the distance between words and worlds, we were trying to move sideways along with the various elements that appear to go in the same direction? What would happen to the “senseless hurrying of matter” called nature if we were to go in the same direction? Would it be as senseless as before? What would happen to the so-called secondary qualities if they were viewed as



The Curse of Bigness, font as artwork in exhibition and used for its signage, Dexter Sinister for Queens Museum (2010)



The Curse of Bigness, exhibition catalog with Meta-the-difference-between-the-two-font, Dexter Sinister for Queens Museum (2010)



Simplicity: Ideas of Practice
in Mathematics & the Arts

A Conference at the Graduate Center
City University of New York
April 3-5, 2013
Proshansky Auditorium
365 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY

CONFERENCE
ORGANIZERS

Juliette Kennedy
Roman Kossak
Michael Hrusa

Clay Mathematics Institute
Graduate Center
CUNY

Conference admission is free and open
to the public, but registration is re-
quired. For more information and to
register, please visit

<http://www.s-i-m-p-l-e-i-t-y.org/>

Sponsors: Clay Mathematics Institute,
Finnish Cultural Foundation; FRAME
Foundation, The Graduate Center,
CUNY (Advanced Research Collaborative
Committee for Interdisciplinary
Science Studies, Comparative
Literature Program and Mathematics
Program) and the National Science
Foundation



Simplicity, Ideas of Practice in Mathematics and the Arts, conference poster with custom font (2013)

This multidisciplinary conference aims
to uncover criteria of simplicity in
mathematics that are informed by per-
spectives from art and architecture,
the philosophy and history of math-
ematics, and current mathematical
practice. Each day of this conference
will feature talks, roundtable discus-
sions and film screenings.

Invited participants: Andrew Arana,
Philosophy, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Rachael DeLue,
Art & Archaeology, Princeton University, Jennifer J. Freitag, *Philosophy, Boston
University*, Chris Franks, *Philosophy,
University of Notre Dame*, Etienne
Glyz, *Mathematics, École Normale
Supérieure, Lyon*, Michael Gromov,
*Mathematics, IHES, Paris and New
York University*, Rizalde Iemhoff, *Phi-
losophy, Utrecht University*, Hanna
Johansson, *Philosophy, History, Culture
& Art Studies, University of Helsinki*,
Maryam Mirzakhani, *Mathematics,
University of Chicago*, Dusa McDuff,
*Mathematics, Barnard College, Col-
umbia University*, Juhan Pallasmaa,
Juhani Pallasmaa Architects, Helsinki,
David Reimann, *designer, New York*,
Miguel A. Rincón, *Mathematics & Con-
temporary Art, Helsinki*, Amy Sanderson,
art historian, New York, Peter Sarnak,
*Mathematics, Institute for Advanced
Study and Princeton University*, Kate
Shepherd, *artist, New York*, Rikka
Stewen, *Finnish Academy of Fine Arts,
Helsinki*, Dennis Sullivan, *Mathematics,
Graduate Center, CUNY and SUNY at
Stony Brook*, Andrés Villaveces, *Math-
ematics, National University of Col-
ombia, Bogotá*, Dan Walsh, *artist, New
York*, Stephen Wolfram, *Wolfram Re-
search, Champaign IL*, Hugh Woodin,
*Mathematics, University of California,
Berkeley*, Andrea Wozni, *Art History,
University of Augsburg*, Noura Claudia
Yaneff, *Neuroscience
Laboratory, Aix-Marseille University*,
Jan Zwicky, *Philosophy, University of
Victoria*.

Film program: Andy Goldsworthy,
David Hammons, Richard Serra, Andy
Warhol and William Wegman

Organizers: Juliette Kennedy, *Ma-
thematics, University of Helsinki*, Roman
Kossak, *Mathematics, Graduate Cen-
ter and Bronx Community College,
CUNY* and Philip Ording, *Mathemat-
ics, Mepham Evers College, CUNY*

On the Infinite:
An Interdisciplinary Symposium

Lectures by and conversations among
mathematicians, artists, art historians,
philosophers, and architects, accom-
panied by an exhibition of the work of the
sculptor Fred Sandback.

Institute Henri Poincaré
11, rue Pierre et Marie Curie
Paris 75005
October 18-21, 2017

Conference admission is free and open
to the public, but registration is re-
commended. For more information and
to register, please visit

<http://www.i-n-f-i-n-i-t-y.org/>

Sponsors: Institut Français de
Finlande; University of Helsinki;
Matematiikan Rahasto of the Finnish
Academy of Science and Letters;
Institut Henri Poincaré; European
Research Council; Magnus Ehrenroth
Foundation.



Infinity, An Interdisciplinary Symposium, conference poster with custom font (2017)

Infinity: the break in the horizon,
the 'what cannot be counted', bound-
less, bottomless, eternal, infinite
and absolute. The infinite encloses
physical space; the infinite holds
time within itself. Set theorists
have developed a vast mathematical
theory of the infinite, while at the
same time the concept of infinity has
permeated other areas of culture. In
this four-day interdisciplinary sym-
posium we juxtapose lectures by set
theorists and other mathematicians
with those by art historians, artists
and philosophers, in an attempt to
create a dialogue across cultures.

Invited participants: Yves André,
mathematics, Paris VI, Andrew
Arana philosophy, IHÉS, Paris, Joan
Bogaria mathematics, Barcelona,
Emily Brady philosophy, Edinburgh,
Maria Clara Corrêa art and art
history, Universidad Nacional de
Colombia, Briony Fer art history,
UCL, Sebastian Gadea philosophy,
Clermont-Ferrand, Wilfrid Hodges
mathematics, QMUL emeritus, Hodges
Johnstone on history, Helsinki, Magidor mathematics, Hebrew
University, Maryam Mirzakhani
mathematics, University of Chicago,
Pärnä Oeding mathematics, San
Lawrence College, Juhani Pallasmaa
architecture, Helsinki, SMITH
artist, Paris, John Steel mathematics,
Berkeley, Valentin Tasic mathematics,
University of New Brunswick,
Jean-Philippe Uzan CNRS, Institut
d'Astrophysique de Paris, Andre
Villaveces mathematics, Bogotá,
Philip Welch mathematics, Bristol,
Hugh Woodin mathematics and
philosophy, Harvard

Exhibition: Fred Sandback at the
Institut Henri Poincaré in the Am-
phithéâtre Hermite, IHP

Organizers: Michael Harris, Columbia
University, Juliette Kennedy, Uni-
versity of Helsinki, Bojan Velickovic,
Paris Diderot University

LETTER & SPIRIT

of the font you're reading

This is the story

right *now.*

Made by Dexter Sinister in 2012,

of thinking about the alphabet,

the type draws on 500 years

compressed here

6. Meta-the-difference-between-the-two-font

Letter & Spirit (35 mm film version), Chaumont, France (2012)



KADIST

between-the-two engine. This runs on the www.kadist.org server, automatically producing new versions of the font once a week, regular as, umm, clockwork. This timed release is the regular tick-tick-tick of the RESONATOR. Finally, the DISPLAY is the actual KADIST logo, and its specific typographic form, at any one point in time of course.

Now, in order to guarantee that this 10-year speculation is allowed to run its course, we need to seal the deal by signing a contract to license the software. It is based on MIT's concise template, with certain pragmatic and poetic alterations to suit this case.

Software © 2013, DEXTER SINISTER
Released under a modified MIT License

Permission is hereby granted to KADIST ART FOUNDATION for 10 years from the counter-signed date of this license, having legally obtained a copy of this software and associated documentation files (the "Software"), to deal in the Software without restriction, including without limitation the rights to use, copy, or modify (but not merge, publish, distribute, sublicense, and/or sell copies of) the Software, subject to the following conditions:

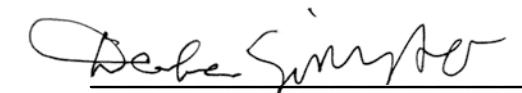
The above copyright notice and this permission notice shall be included in all copies or substantial portions of the Software.

The Software is provided "as is," without warranty of any kind, Express or implied, including but not limited to the warranties of Merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose and non-infringement. In no event shall the authors or copyright holders be liable for any claim, damages or other liability, whether in an action of contract, tort or otherwise, arising from, out of or in connection with the Software or the use or other dealings in the Software.

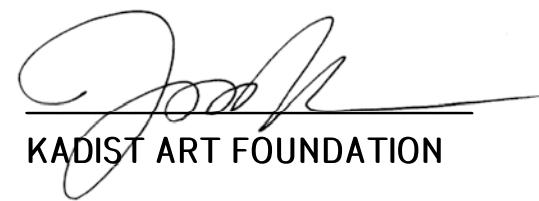
The Software relies on platforms and protocols that will inevitably change over the next 10 years, as the speed of technology continues to accelerate to near-terminal velocity. Nevertheless, every reasonable effort will be made in good faith by DEXTER SINISTER and KADIST ART FOUNDATION to maintain the Software over this time period.

Further, on signing and initiating this 10-year license, KADIST ART FOUNDATION asserts an up-front commitment to allowing this eventual process to run its course, without excessive concern as to the form of the logo at any one particular moment, and with willful disregard to the winds of fashion or the mandates of technology, but instead, to pledge and bond itself to the principle that slowness and attention are their own rewards.

19 January 2013



DEXTER SINISTER



KADIST ART FOUNDATION



Kadist Art Foundation identity, painted sign, business card (2015)



6. Meta-the-difference-between-the-two-font

Kadist Art Foundation, business card (2016)



7. The Wattis Institute

The Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts is connected with California College of Art but maintains an independent exhibition and public program—this distinction is historically important. Working intimately with director Anthony Huberman, I designed a graphic identity including website, printed matter, signs, electronic materials for an institute of contemporary art in San Francisco. The Wattis identity, as much as anything, is translated as a manner of speaking in complete sentences where excessive punctuation provides the graphic framework. Based on a previous working editorial relationship, the written voice was developed in close collaboration with the director as he was reinventing the institution. The graphics followed. Its setting in the Bay Area provided some cues for how to reconsider an art institution in the face of electronic networks, and the design uses programmatic idiosyncrasies to generate its forms. However, the identity relies on a specific tone of writing at least as much as it does on its graphic formats.

The identity has evolved incrementally since 2014, providing an engaged, patient, and persistent voice (both typographic and literal) in the San Francisco cultural landscape.

<http://www.wattis.org>

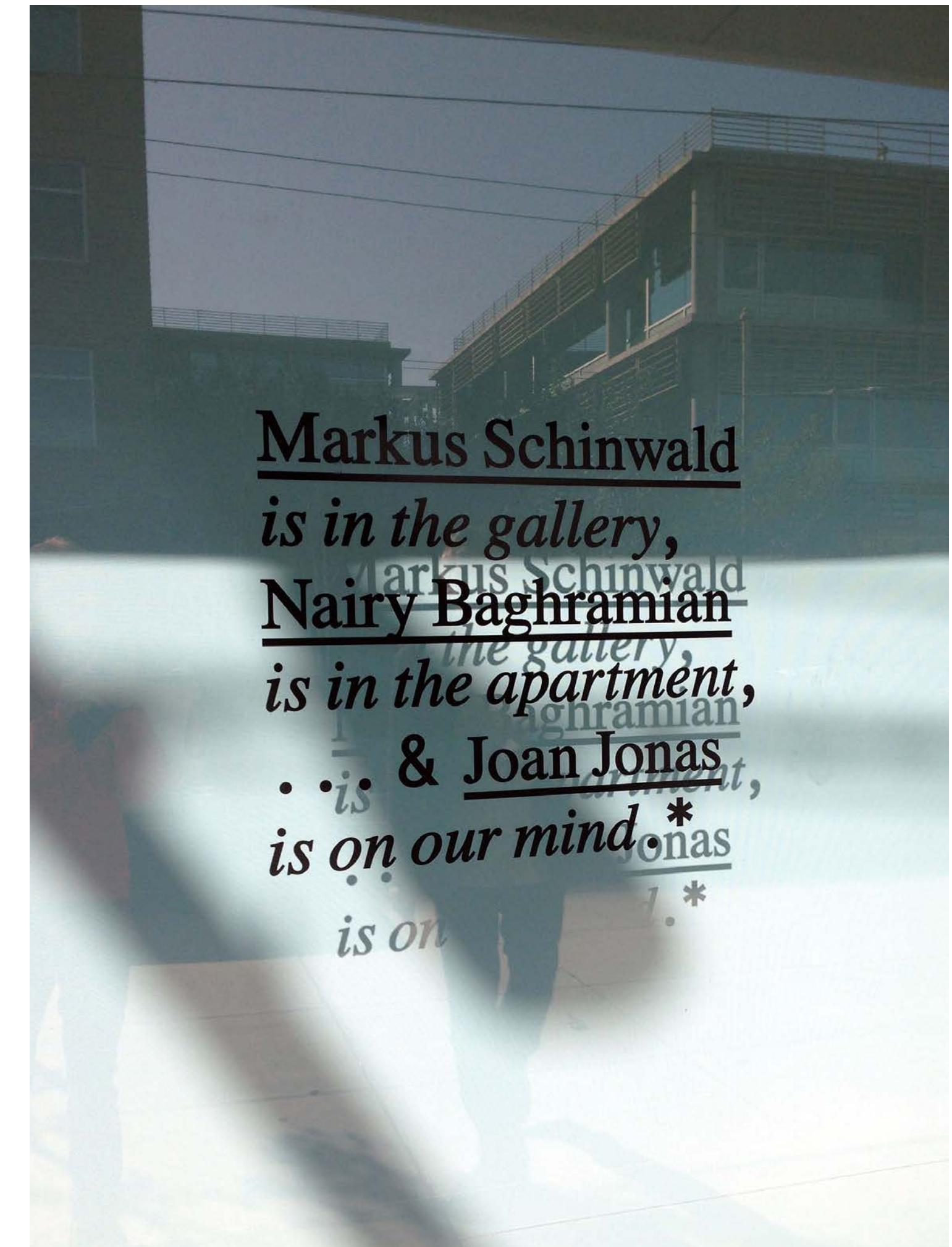
. +* The
Wattis
Institute

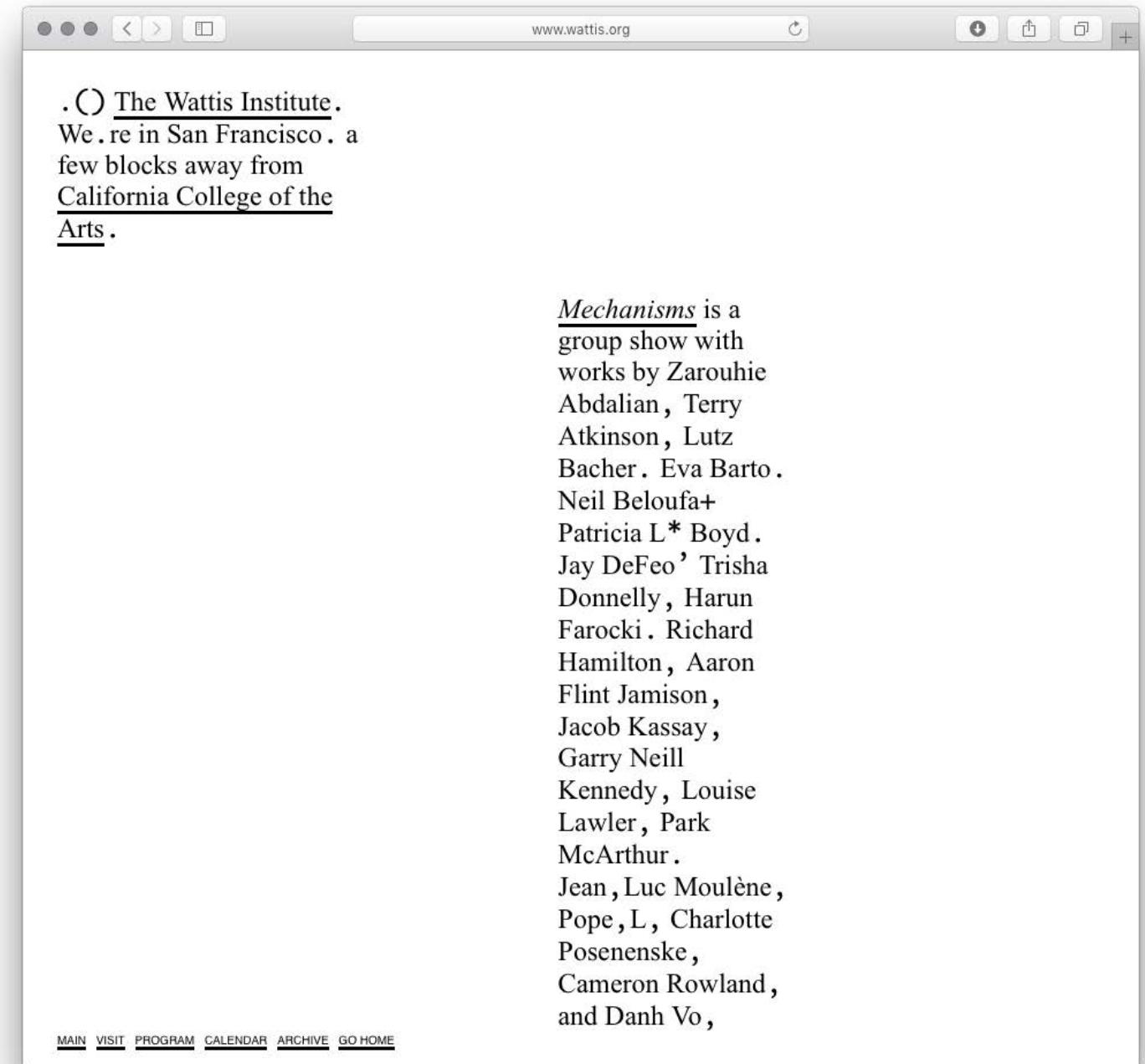
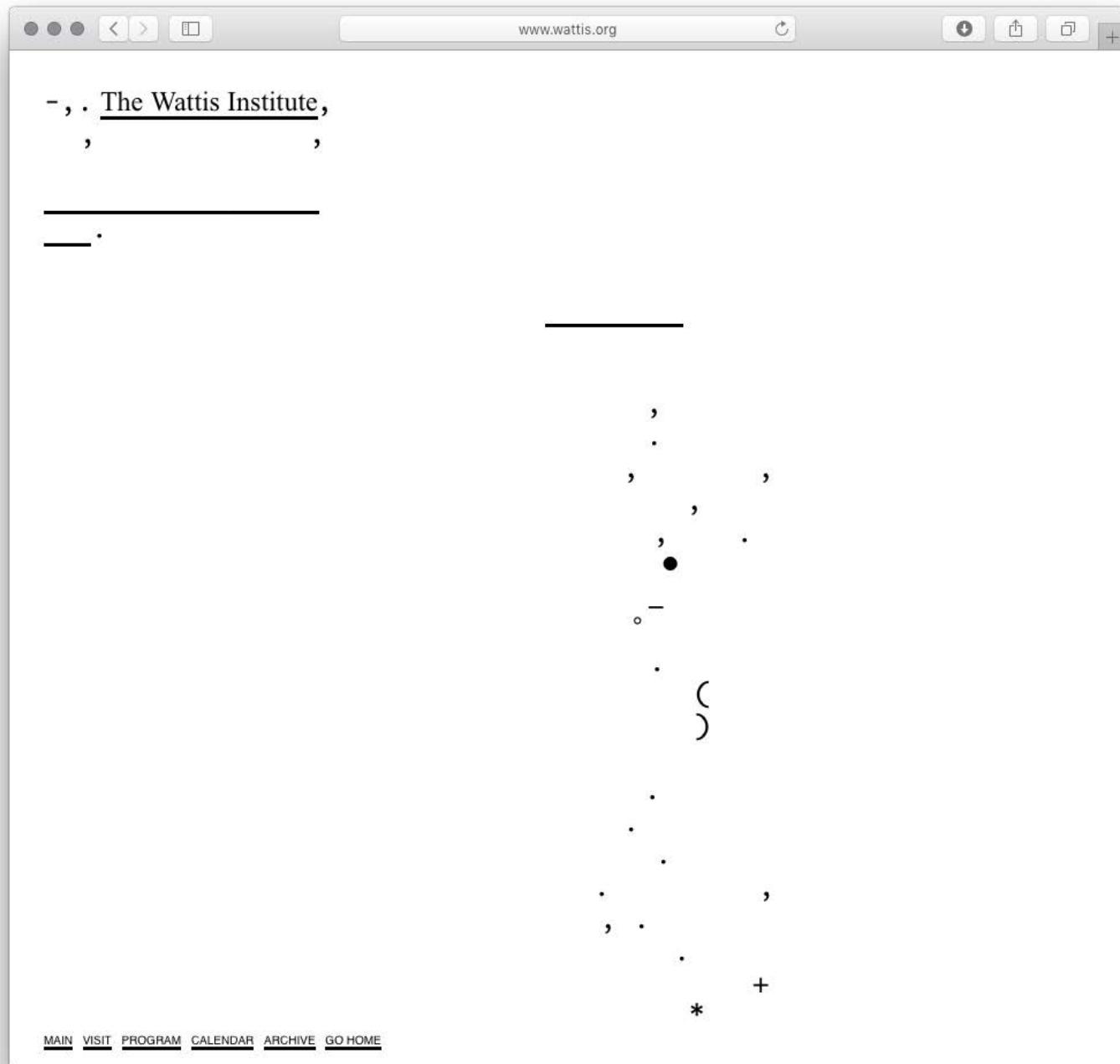
•°. The Wattis
Institute

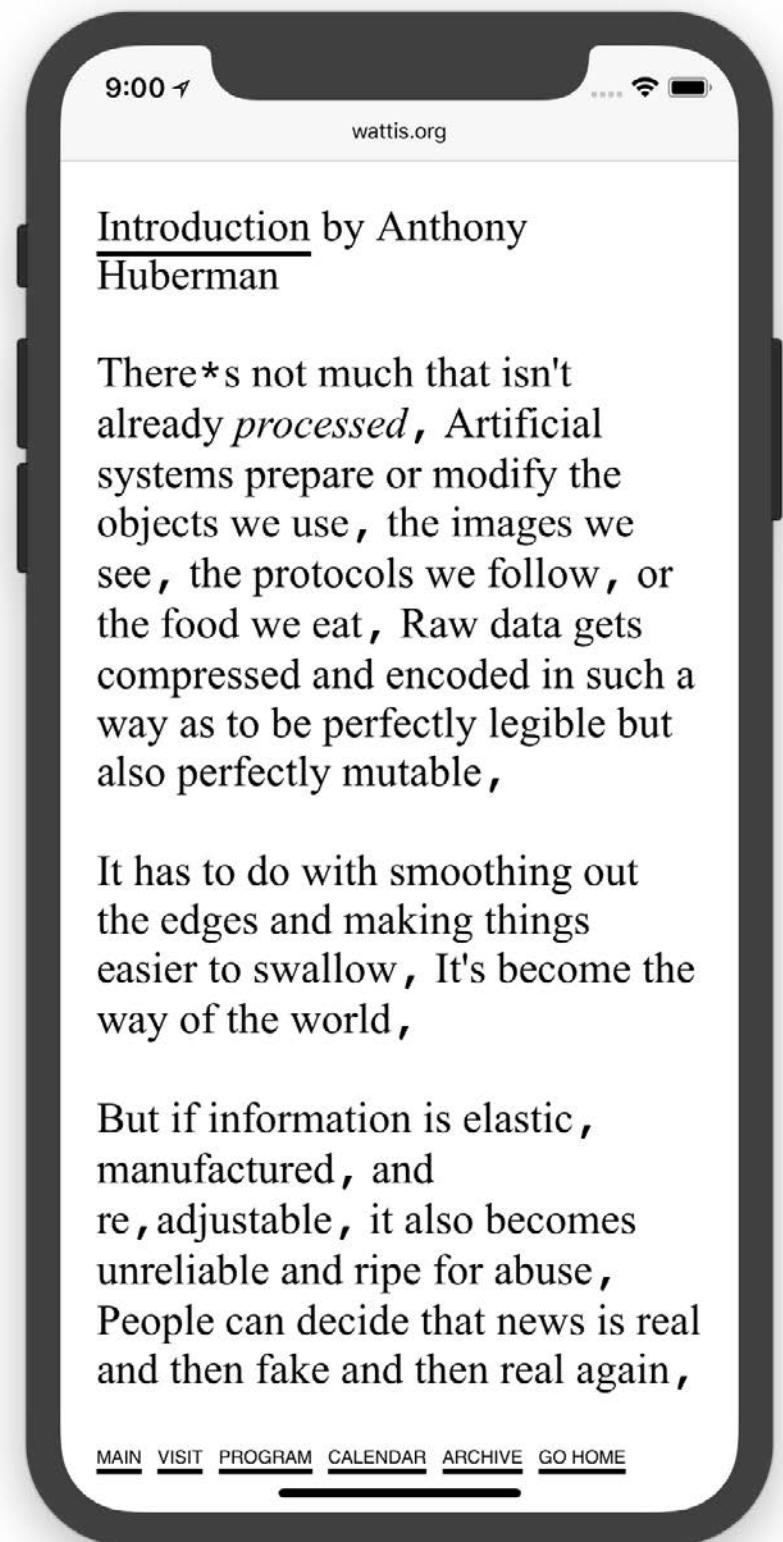
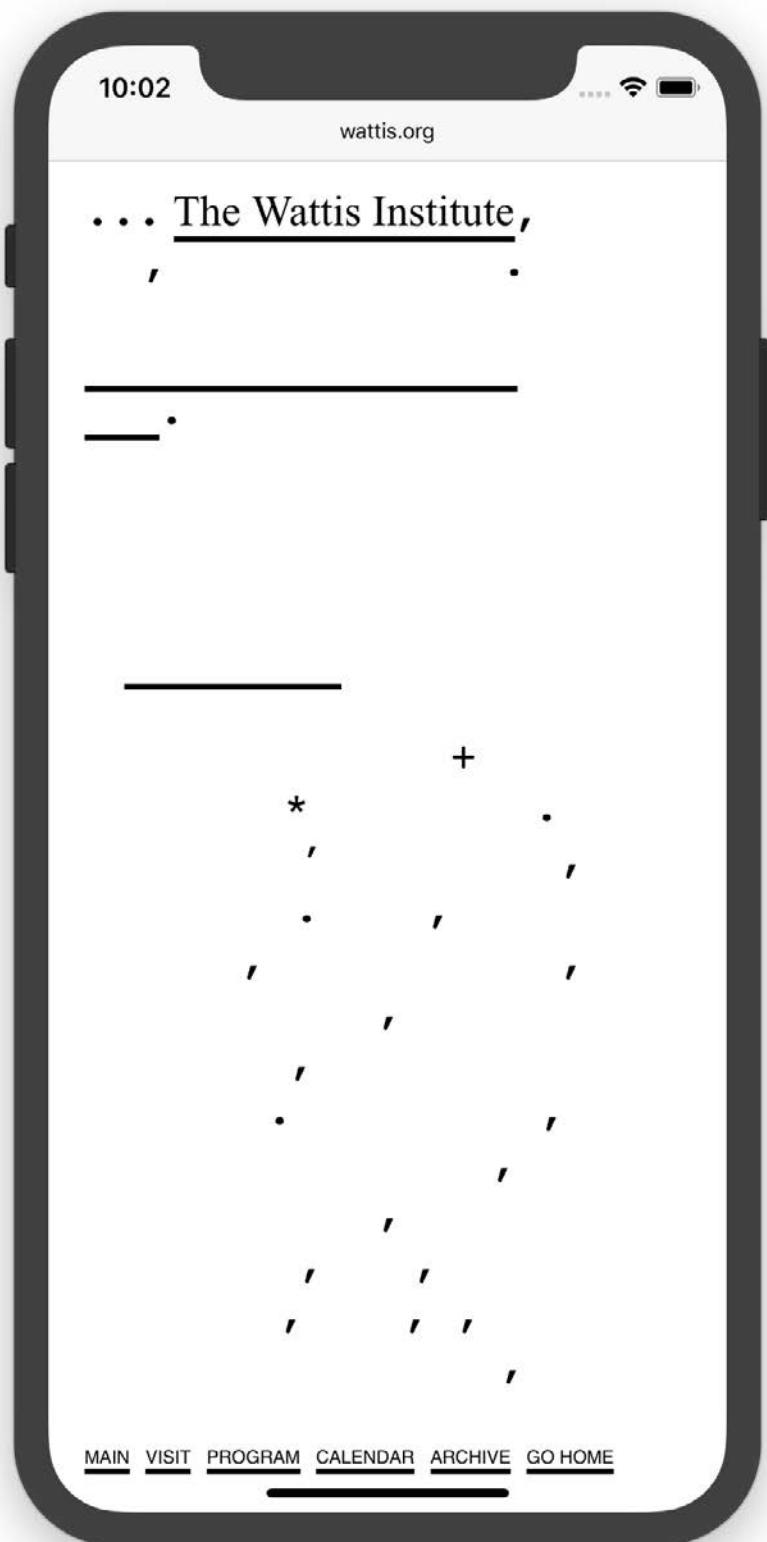
**The Wattis
/
Institute
for:
Contemporary
Arts)**



The Wattis Institute, entry sign (2014)







Markus Schinwald
in
 ,
Nairy
Baghramian *the*
 ,
 ...
 & Joan Jonas
our .*

WWW.WATTIS.ORG

9.9/2014–12.13/2014

Markus
Schinwald *in*
 ,
Nairy
Baghramian
the ,
 ... & Joan
Jonas *our*
 .*



Here is a text about
Jos de Gruyter & Harald Thys
and their exhibition of new
and recent work titled *Tram 3*.

Terrifying is one good way to describe the state of the world today. There is war and the extreme violence that comes with it. There is racism. Disease. Poverty. Natural disasters. There is the feeling of exposed powerlessness in the face of ruthless power. There is the rapist, the alcoholic parent, or the depressed loner and his machine gun.

I could go on.

But the way ordinary people behave in their everyday lives is just as terrifying. We conform and follow norms. We believe what we're told. We produce and we consume. We allow standardization to take over. We Google. We Facebook.



We're all so goddamn *obedient*. Even those who disagree or misbehave are part of the program—dissent is a necessary part of any dialectic.

Everything
opens
TONIGHT
at The“Wattis,
Institute-
. . . Public
reception from
7–9 pm.

CCA Wattis Institute
for Contemporary Arts
360 Kansas St., San Francisco
www.wattis.org

*, The Wattis Institute



The“Wattis, Institute—

• • •



.,
www.wattis.org

Left: The Wattis Institute, poster (2014). Right: Business card (2014)

CCA Wattis Institute
for Contemporary Arts
360 Kansas St.
San Francisco, CA (94103)
+1/415.355.9671
www.wattis.org : \“

—
; ()
+ / . . : \“

8. Muriel Cooper

This 10-year research project tracks the work of graphic designer Muriel Cooper (1925–1994) across 40 years at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in overlapping roles as a designer, teacher, and researcher. Cooper was the first Design and Media Director at MIT Press, set up the Visible Language Workshop, a hands-on production and teaching facility in the Department of Architecture, and was a founding faculty member of the Media Lab. She was the first tenured female professor in the School of Architecture, worked in an overwhelmingly male context, and died unexpectedly. Her contributions to design have been underrepresented.

This project began in 2006 during a graphic design commission from MIT Center for Advanced Visual Studies when I found an accidental archive of posters produced by Cooper and her students. This research continued with a fellowship at MIT in 2006 and then a Graham Foundation grant in 2013. The results include a self-published pamphlet, talks at Berlage (Rotterdam), IASPIS (Stockholm), MIT (Cambridge), Werkplaats Typografie (Arnhem), Yale University (New Haven), an exhibition at Columbia Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, and a research monograph with Robert Wiesenberger and contributions from Nicholas Negroponte and Lisa Strausfeld published by MIT Press in 2017.

In all of its stages from PDF pamphlet to lecture to exhibition to monograph, this research has produced worldwide renewed interest in Muriel Cooper. She was a pioneering female graphic designer who, at the age of 50 and years before the Apple Macintosh, turned her full attention to the design of computer interfaces. Her restless practice which fluidly mixed design, teaching, and research serves as a template for a generation of young graphic designers today.

July 15, 1980

Jeffrey L. Cruikshank
Editor, Plan
School of Architecture & Planning
MIT, 7-233

Visible Language Workshop
Room 5-411
Massachusetts Institute of
Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts
02139

[Redacted]

Dear Jeff:

When you asked me to prepare an article for Plan, I set myself the task of producing a "graphic" article which would represent the ideas and concerns of the Visible Language Workshop by virtue of its form as well as its content.

In a computer electronic age we see print communication as a model of changing user/maker relationships and the workshop as a place in which the content, quality and technology of communication inform each other in education, professional and research programs.

The article, "Words, Images, Tools and Ideas" would try to fulfill the following criteria:

1. It would make use of the tools, processes and technologies of graphic arts media as directly as possible and the tools would be integrated with concept and product. Many of these are in the workshop. In this case, they include a heavy use of all forms of photography and our computer graphics system for both images and typography.

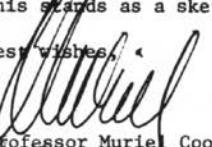
2. The author would be the maker contrary to the specialization mode which makes the author of the content the author, the author of the form the designer, and the author of the craft the typographer/printer.

3. Visual and verbal representation of the ideas would be synthesized rather than separate.

4. Time would remain as fluid and immediate as possible, leaving room for feedback and change.

Much of the material was developed together with Professor Ron MacNeil and the VLW staff. It has been a fascinating opportunity which has elucidated many of the complexities of authorship into print. There is still no magic way - but we propose to keep working at it.

This stands as a sketch for the future.

Best wishes,

Professor Muriel Cooper
Director

26 JULY 2005

AN ACCIDENTAL ARCHIVE AT THE CENTER FOR ADVANCED VISUAL STUDIES

We begin in a locked closet at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies housing a collection of posters, documents, videotapes and related printed ephemera which forms a de-facto archive. Embarking on a client-design relationship with the Center, I arrived in Cambridge to spend a few days going through the archive, examining its contents and making some photographs.



A collection of posters organized loosely on the floor at the Center

The Center for Advanced Visual Studies was established in 1967 by Gyorgy Kepes as a fellowship program for artists. Initiated with considerable institutional and financial support, the Center produced artworks, exhibitions and public programs often accompanied by a poster or publication. These posters in particular then provide an immediate condensed and visually legible accidental archive of its almost forty-year history.

While working my way through the contents of the closet, I was struck immediately by the surface qualities of this extraordinary set of posters. It was not simply the graphic design nor the typography that caught me — rather it was their mode of production. The design of the posters changed sporadically as new designers or administrators appeared, but what remains the same is the way in which each self-consciously incorporates its production method into the design. For example, the poster at right revels in the extreme enlargement of a small sketch, photocopied large and produced on an offset press. The result is a tight and powerful synthesis of what is being said, how it is being said and how what is being said is produced.

I assumed that many of these posters must have been designed by Muriel Cooper. I was already familiar with her work in broad outlines — I knew that she was the first Design Director at MIT Press where she designed *Bauhaus, Learning from Las Vegas* (first edition), *File Under Architecture* and the MIT Press logo; she established the Visible Language Workshop at the MIT Media Lab; and that she died unexpectedly in 1994 just after presenting breakthrough work in new computer interface design.

As it turns out, I was mostly wrong about the posters' design — they were not designed by Muriel. Jacqueline Casey designed many of the early posters and later posters were made by Otto Peine and others. However, many or most of these posters were printed at the Visible Language Workshop, a teaching and production facility in the School of Architecture that Muriel cofounded with Ron MacNeil in 1975.

While poking around in the archive, I also learned that Muriel was briefly a fellow at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies. Her C.V. filed at the Center in 1974 lists Interests and Goals:

Concerned with use of mass production and its constraints and with extending experimental and educational experience into work relationships, reducing artificial human split. The significance of participatory and non-authoritarian communication forms in relation to specialization and professionalism. Structured/unstructured relationships in learning. Direct, responsive means of reproduction. [3]

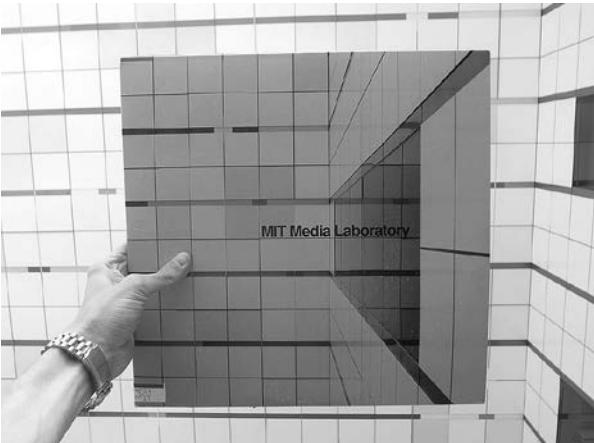


A poster printed at the Visible Language Workshop, 1974

10 AUGUST 2006

A SUB-BASEMENT AT THE MEDIA LAB

We proceed by visiting the MIT Media Lab, where Muriel Cooper spent the last years of her working life, from 1985–1994, continuing the work of the Visible Language Workshop. I'm here to meet Amber Fried-Jimenez, a current graduate student in the Physical Language Workshop run by John Maeda. Amber has procured a laserdisc for me which includes some of the last work of the VLW. With laserdisc in hand, we spend the next hour or so trolling various sub-basements of the Media Lab building searching for an analog laserdisc player capable of playing the 20-year-old media format.



Holding the laserdisc and looking into the Media Lab atrium as pictured on its cover.

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

We eventually score a working analog laserdisc player and monitor. I press play and after some fussing with an arcane remote control, the disc begins. Muriel Cooper appears onscreen dressed in a graphic black and white polka-dot pattern offset by casually rumpled gray hair and reading glasses hung from her neck on a chain. Her voice is immediately enthusiastic and engaged.

I go next to meet Gloriana Davenport, a long-time friend and colleague of Muriel Cooper and currently the director of Media Fabrics group. She begins by giving me some initial background on Muriel's working life.

On graduation from Massachusetts College of Art with a BFA in 1955, Muriel Cooper soon became involved in helping MIT develop a consistent visual language throughout its range of printed materials. MIT was heavily involved in government contracting after WWII and the volume of materials produced was significant. Beginning on a freelance basis, Muriel established the Office of Design Services, which she directed from 1954–1957. In the first American university design program, Muriel developed a house style which helped to make the technical language of much of the research produced at MIT legible for a wider audience.

This work would be continued by her friend and former classmate Jacqueline Casey for thirty years. Describing their time together as students at Massachusetts College of Art provides some clues to what comes after:

I have always been frustrated and intrigued by technology. Jackie Casey and I both went to Mass College of Art in the late 40s. We were cashiers in the school store; we both eventually became bookkeepers — first Jackie and then me. We learned more in the store than we did in the school. In a way, I think of the school store as a model for the VLW. When the store would close in the afternoon, the students who worked there — about a dozen of us — had a studio to ourselves, our own little bin of paints and papers and materials. [11]

In 1958, Muriel left MIT for Milan on a Fulbright scholarship to study exhibition design. Milan was then a lively center of contemporary ideas around product design, architecture and new kinds of interactivity. Returning to Boston, she established Muriel Cooper Media Design in 1959. In her private practice Muriel returned again to work with MIT, a client sympathetic to her concerns and which provided a natural platform for her work. She also began to work with the MIT Press, designing book covers and by 1964, Muriel Cooper had designed the MIT Press logo — an abstracted set of seven vertical bars that is a high-water mark in twentieth century graphic design.

February 25–March 28, 2014
Arthur Ross Architecture Gallery
Columbia University
Tuesday–Saturday, 12–6 pm

MESSAGES AND MEANS MURIEL COOPER AT MIT

Opening and discussion February 25, 2014
7 pm, East Gallery, Buell Hall with
Ron MacNeil, MIT
Nicholas Negroponte, MIT Media Lab
David Reinhardt, Princeton University
Lisa Strausfeld, Bloomberg
Mark Wasuta, GSAPP
Robert Wiesenberger, Columbia University

www.arthurrossarchitecturegallery.org

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"Messages and Means, Muriel Cooper at MIT," exhibition curating and writing with Robert Wiesenberger, physical layout and design with Mark Wasiuta and Adam Bandler, and graphic design for Columbia GSAPP (2014)



"Messages and Means, Muriel Cooper at MIT" (2014)



03



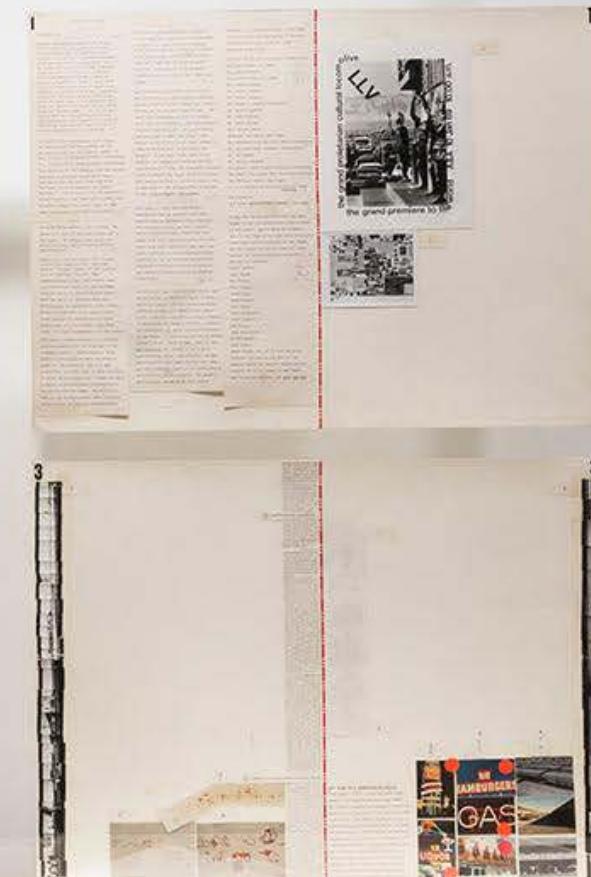
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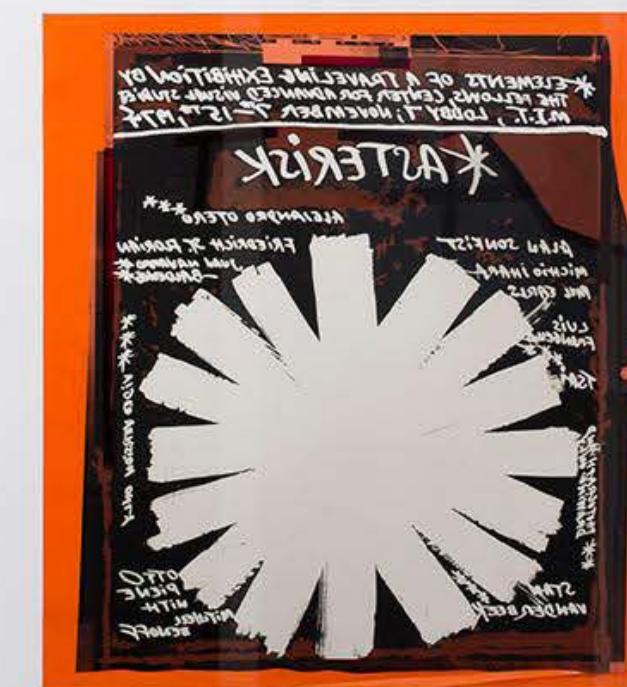
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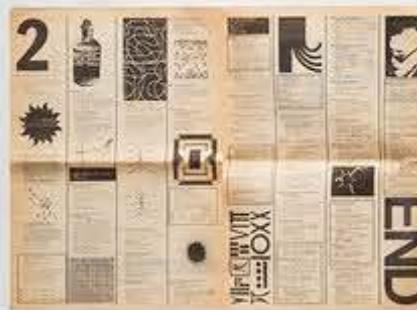
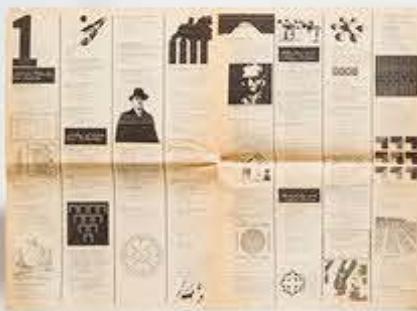
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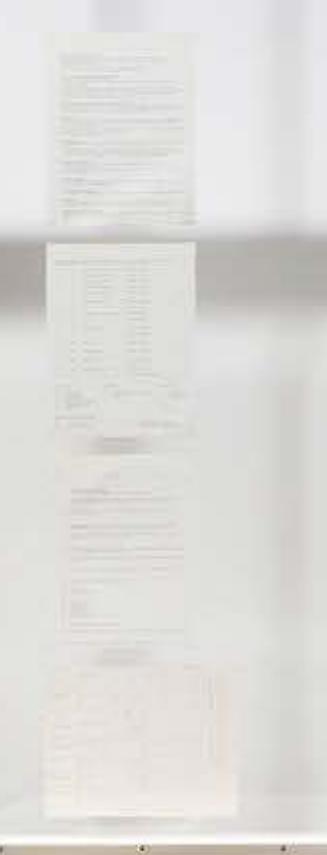
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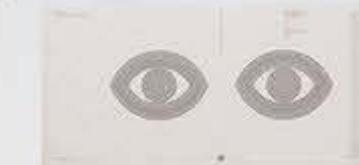
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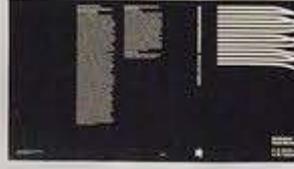
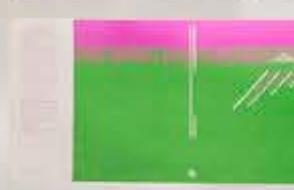
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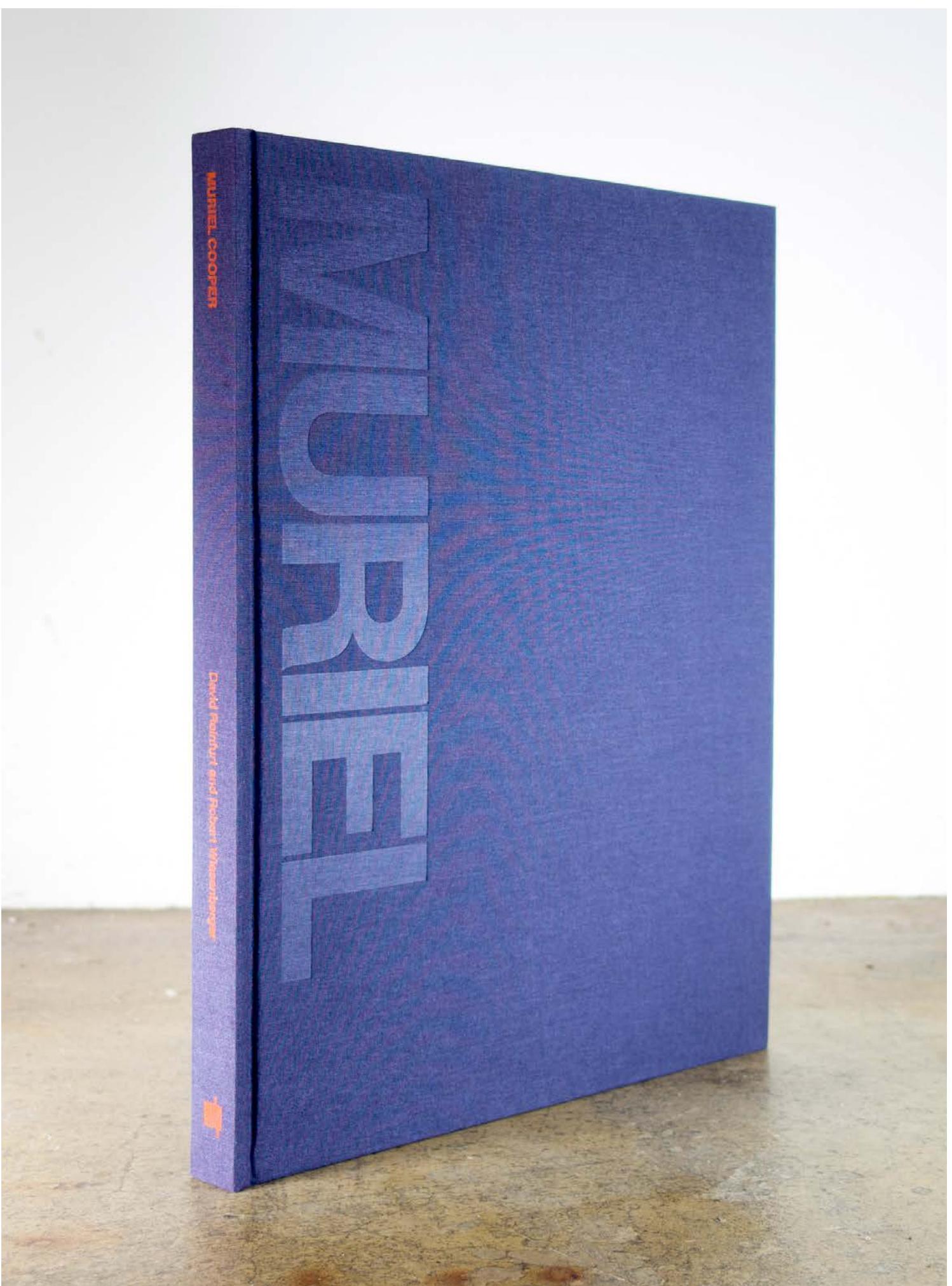


11



12





Muriel Cooper, research monograph with Robert Wiesenberger published by MIT Press, Cambridge (2017)

Soft Copy (1974–1994)

David Reinfurt

Self-Portrait

A double self-portrait offers some clues to Muriel Cooper's thinking around human-computer interface design. This composite picture registers at least three different photographic times and as many imaging feedback loops. It's a layered image on its surface, and baroque in its construction; the picture was assembled over 10 years, beginning around 1974. Around that time, Cooper wrote a bio which laid out her interests: "...beginnings and process. More with change and technology and their meanings to human communication than with rigorous graphic design theory and style."¹

Cooper was not a traditional graphic designer. She was certainly not a computer programmer. But she was persistently interested in graphics, new technologies, and their interfaces. In the summer of 1967, she attended a computer-aided design and programming class in the Department of Mechanical Engineering at MIT taught by Nicholas Negroponte. Negroponte had joined the faculty in the School of Architecture and Planning, establishing the Architecture Machine Group in 1968. By 1972, Cooper was beginning to explore how computers might apply to graphic design, and Negroponte arranged for the installation of one computer at the MIT Press under the short-lived umbrella of a graphic research unit.

While Media Director at the Press around 1973, Cooper was introduced to Ron MacNeil. Cooper and MacNeil co-founded the Visible Language Workshop (VLW) within the MIT Department of Architecture in 1974 and worked together for twenty years. In 1971 MacNeil had also enrolled in Negroponte's programming class and by 1978 he apprenticed himself to the Architecture Machine Group, spending six months and leaving with a cast-off teletype interface board and a 16-line machine language program.

Although Cooper was not technically conversant with the computers, she did immediately recognize their potential:

I was convinced that the line between reproduction tools and design would blur when information became electronic and that the lines between designer and artist, author and designer, professional and amateur would also dissolve.²

Beginning with her exposure to the Architecture Machine Group, continuing with brief computer experiments at the MIT Press, and eventually through direct engagement with the electronics and software that MacNeil brought into the VLW, Cooper sporadically attempted to teach herself to program. She never learned but remained fascinated by the relationship between technology and graphic production; computers offered a bright new horizon for direct, immediate control plus the promise of real-time feedback. In the slideshow introduction to an MIT Summer Session at the Visible Language Workshop in July 1981, Cooper described



Muriel Cooper, self-portrait with Polaroid SX-70, video imaged and printed at the Visible Language Workshop, c. 1984



Computer self-portrait, Muriel Cooper (right) with Denis A. Dondis, produced in Nicholas Negroponte's design and programming class, MIT Department of Mechanical Engineering, 1967

that idea of instant visualization, of effecting the production tool, or the reproduction tool, being able to respond back to the tool very fast, "oh it's too red", "oh it's too green", all that sort of comes from the frustrations of having dealt professionally ... the new tools are going to, if they are in some way controlled or understood by the users, become as interactive as these cruder things that we have described ... the idea of typesetters on your desk gives you a kind of control you haven't had since you were a medieval monk.³

The source images for Cooper's double self-portrait are from around 1974, still frames excerpted from a video recording. Ron MacNeil suggests these were captured by a Portapak battery-powered black-and-white video camera system, a new technology at the time. Portable 16 mm and 8 mm film cameras were widely available for recording moving images on the go, but the film medium and its processing limited what could be shot and where. There was a necessary delay between exposing an image and viewing it. Film is light-based and chemical, but video is electronic and magnetic and so removed this time gap – images could be captured and played back on a monitor immediately.

The photographic camera that Cooper points back at the video camera is a Polaroid SX-70 compact instant camera, identified by its flash bar and all-black body. Based just around the corner on Main Street in Cambridge, Polaroid routinely provided development versions of its advanced imaging technologies to the VLW for experimentation. The SX-70 was quickly adopted in the workshop as an immediate, responsive image-making tool.

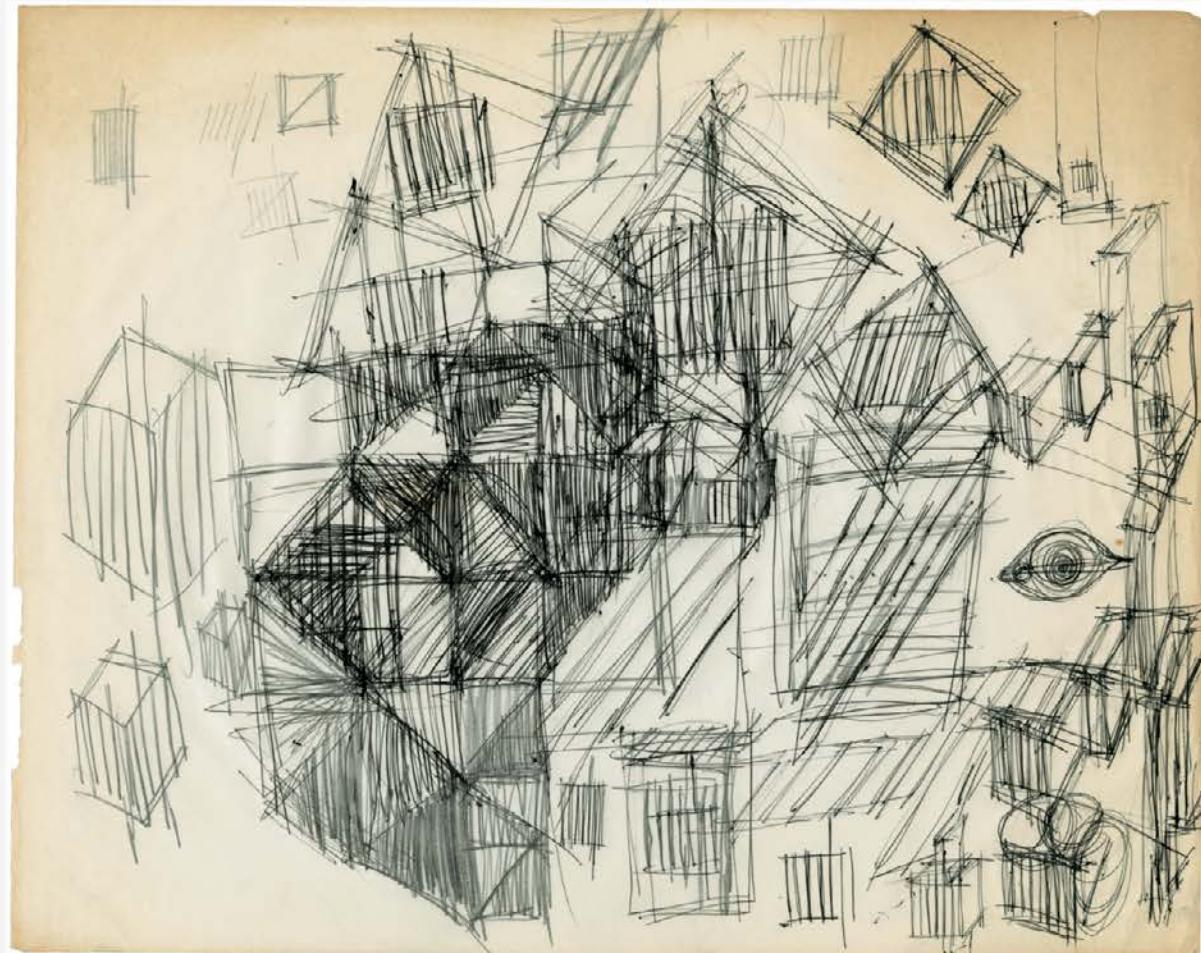
The SX-70 produced instant photographic prints, although this technology was nothing new. Since its first consumer camera, the Land Camera Model 95 launched in 1947, Polaroid had manufactured film that produced photographs within minutes of exposure without any additional darkroom processing. The SX-70 significantly improved the film technology by packaging paper and chemicals as a single unit, preloaded into a replaceable cartridge. After taking a picture, the image emerged directly from the SX-70 with no further manipulation. Unlike earlier films, the new film left no chemical residue and produced no additional waste, and SX-70 pictures could be made in rapid succession. (At the product launch, Polaroid president Edwin Land unfolded an SX-70 from his suit pocket and shot five photographs in 10 seconds.)

Like the Portapak video camera, the SX-70 was designed to be portable, with a compact, collapsible form. It could be tucked into a bag or coat pocket so that the camera traveled with its user. Also like the Portapak, the SX-70 provided immediate feedback in the form of a printed image, visible moments after it was exposed. This concise imaging loop opened up a wide range of novel uses for the camera. Cooper's designer at the MIT Press and student in the Visible Language Workshop, Wendy Richmond, recalls: "We documented every step of the way. We learned this from Muriel, who always had a Polaroid or 35 mm camera hanging from her neck. We were more interested in the process than the final product."⁴

The chronology of these two still frames is clearly marked. The top frame catches a moment of photographic exposure; Cooper's right eye is closed in framing and concentration while the flash from her Polaroid SX-70 fires. Although instant Polaroid was used extensively in the VLW, relatively few photographs include Cooper. More often than not, as here, she was behind the camera.

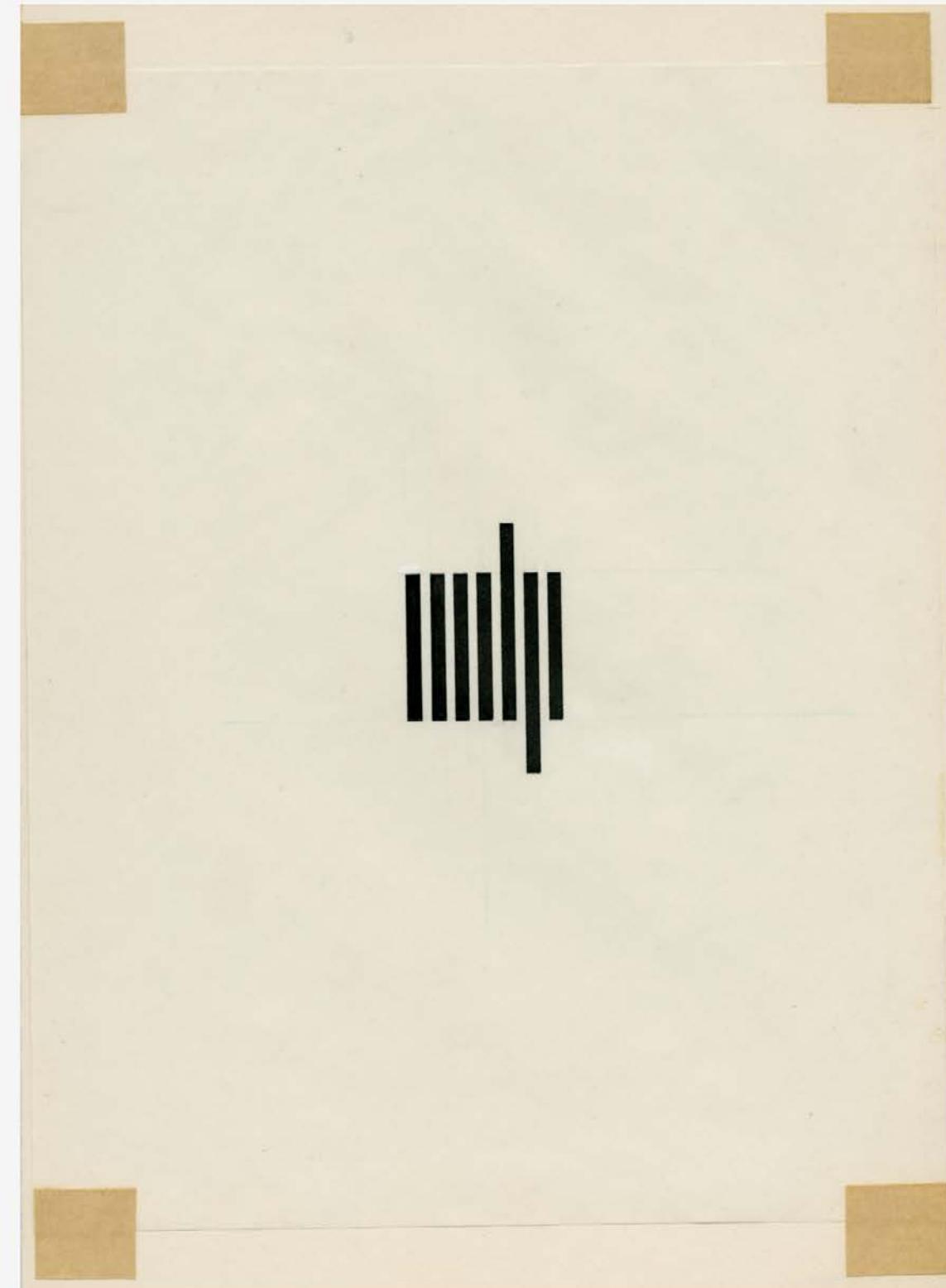
While the first frame is the instant of image making, the bottom frame records the moment of image printing. These two points in time as recorded on videotape are not far apart, but here the gap is essential. Between the first and second frames, an instant photograph emerges from the camera. The image captured in its chemical sandwich will develop in the next sixty seconds. Meanwhile, Cooper stares directly back at the Portapak video camera, one eye given to her SX-70. She is a cyborg – her left eye replaced and upgraded by the Polaroid lens. The undeveloped photograph coming out of her camera is a record of what she sees, and soon it will reveal the Portapak, its operator, and the surrounding context. For now, that picture remains blank.

Around 10 years elapsed between the making of these two video images and the assembly of the composite print. The finished double print was produced on a large-format printer in the Visible Language Workshop. This "printer" was more of a camera, and used large-format (24-inch-wide) instant photographic paper provided by Polaroid. One such apparatus was a 20-by-24-inch experimental Polaroid camera that printed an electronic image directly to instant photographic



44
Muriel Cooper, research monograph, interior spread (2017)

Design



Design

45



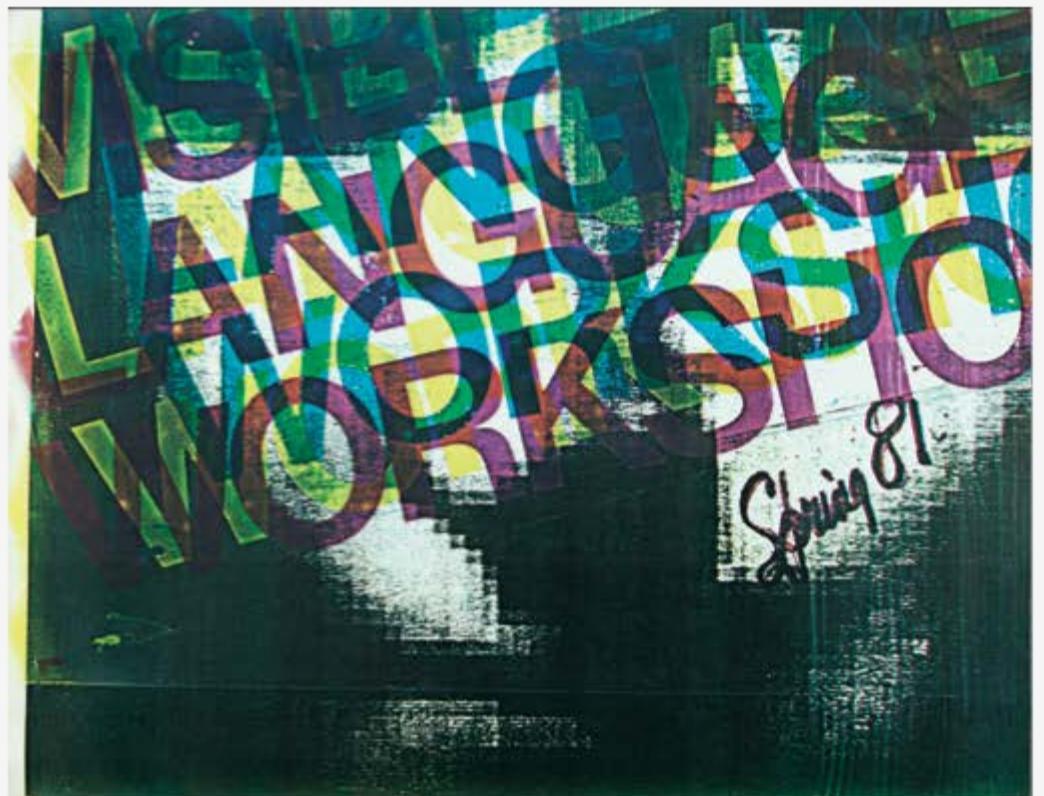
Messages and Means course poster, Munel Cooper and Ron MacNeil, 1974



Poster for 'Music in Public Places,' MIT Design Services,
printed at the Visible Language Workshop, c. 1974

Messages and Means students in Building 5 workshop,
Department of Architecture, c. 1975





4.880
PROCESS AND PRESENTATION (A)
2.4,6
Joel Slyton
Tuesday 9-12
Lab TBA

A production-based workshop designed for intermediate and advanced students to investigate and test new methods of image generation and to express serious personal communication concerns. Emphasizes depth, quality, and realization of concept through development of visual communication skills and appropriate media. Investigation includes historical, theoretical, critical frameworks. Students are responsible for developing written proposals for a production project, research documents associated with this project, the final realization of the product. Workshop will include lectures, guest artists and student presentations/critiques, field trips, and periodic review by VLS faculty and guests. This semester we are fortunate to have Professor Nathan Lyons, Director of the Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, as a visiting artist/critic. He will conduct an intensive one week seminar dealing with Images, Media and Meaning. February 5-12, 4-7 p.m. daily. Long-term projects will develop from this seminar, and he will return at the end of the semester to review them. This is an advanced subject and permission of the instructor is required. This workshop could support thesis work. The Lab Fee is \$35.

4.886
ADVANCED ELECTROGRAPHICS
Approaches to Visual Communication (A)
0.9,6
Virginia Holmes and Tom Norton
Wednesday 1-4
Lab Monday 1-4

A production-based workshop designed for intermediates and advanced students who are ready to work independently on projects which explore the graphic applications of electrographic tools (processes and processes that handle and control images by electronic phenomena). Emphasis will be on depth, quality, and realization of concept and product. The workshop will consist of lectures, visits by artists and practitioners, and monthly reviews (both one-on-one and group). The ability to work consistently and reliably on one's own is emphasized. Students will also be responsible for developing two to three major projects, or the equivalent thereof. Permission of the instructor is needed to enroll.

The Lab Fee is to be arranged.

4.889
COMPUTER/TYPGRAPHY SEMINAR
Special Projects in Graphic Communication (A)
0.9,0
Muriel Cooper/Ron MacNeill and Staff
Tuesday 1-4
Lab TBA

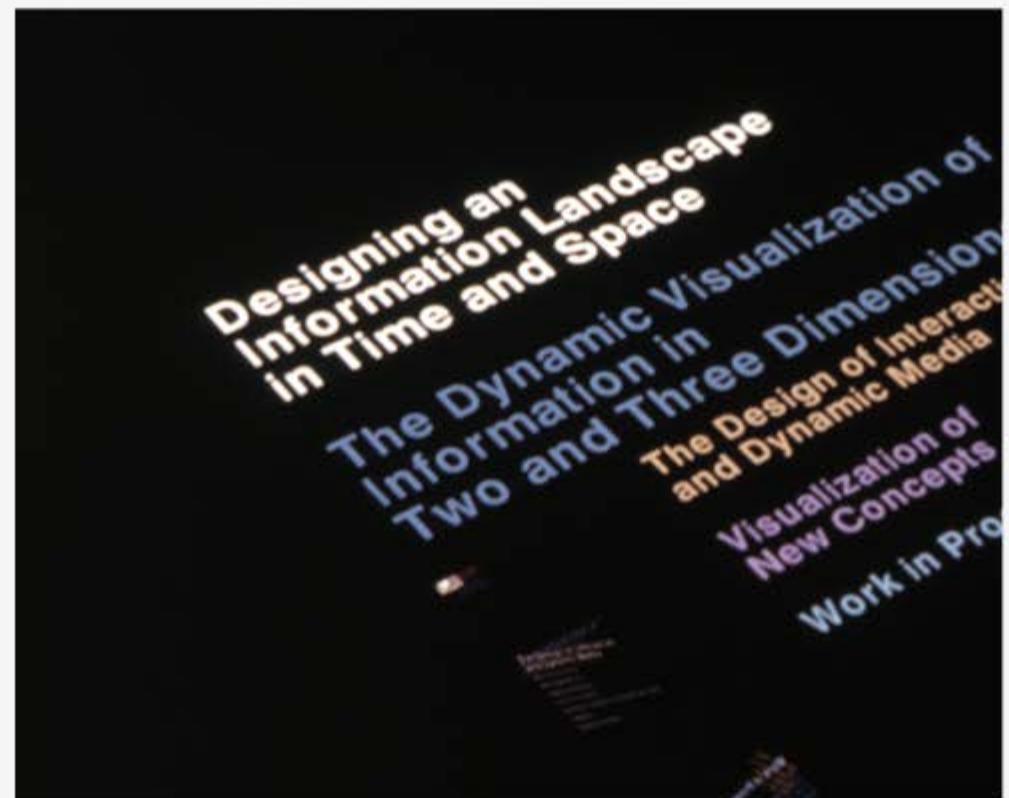
A seminar designed for computer-graphics and graphics people to research and formulate the relationships between those fields with particular reference to typography, layout, and pagination. The seminar will include an intensive introduction to computer-graphic and typography by participants and guests. There will be weekly outside projects, a final paper, and two computer projects demonstrating aspects of research for future development. Members will work in pairs or groups. Participation will be limited to serious graphic and computer students who are actively relating the two fields. Visiting lecturers will focus on technological and qualitative issues of hard and soft copy, including font digitization for reproduction, design, layout, pagination, resolution, and static and dynamic imaging. Permission of the instructor is needed to enroll. A limited number of second meetings and computer time will be arranged. The Lab Fee is \$25.



Muriel Cooper, self-portrait with Polaroid SX-70, video imaged and printed at the Visible Language Workshop, c. 1984

Visible Language Workshop course catalog, Spring 1981

Information Landscapes, Muriel Cooper, David Small, Suguru Ishizaki,
Earl Rennison, and Lisa Strausfeld, 1994



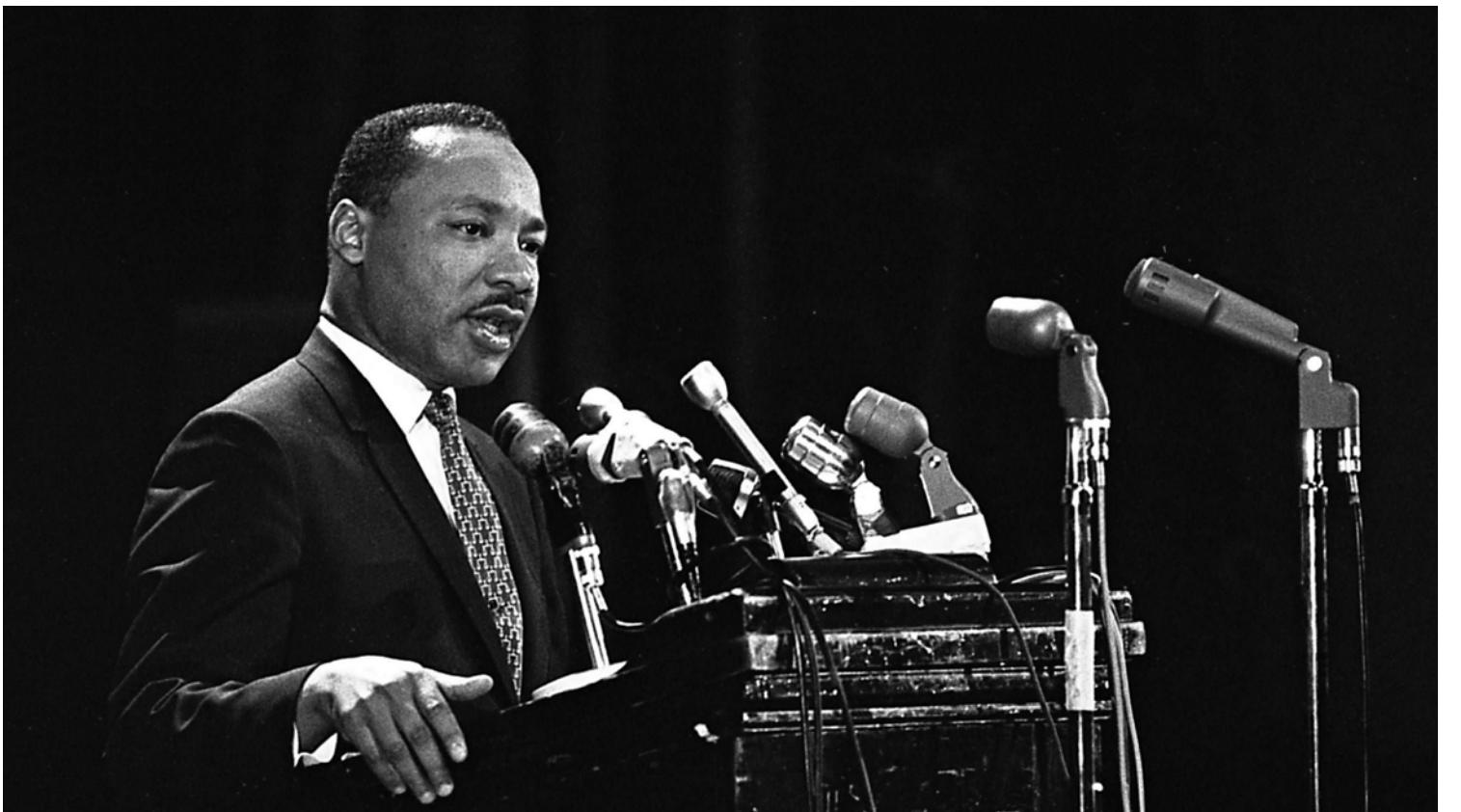
9 . Kings Memorial, Boston

Kings Memorial, Boston was designed with artist Adam Pendleton and architect David Adjaye for a site at the northeast corner of Boston Common to mark the indelible legacies of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King. I was invited to develop the comprehensive textual and typographic approach. Adjaye Associates Architects, Adam Pendleton Studio, David Reinfurt, Future/Pace, and Gilbane Boston comprised the full team for this invited competition. Our chosen site across from the State House has been and remains the central point for public demonstration in Boston, so we imagined an active civic experience in place of a static monument.

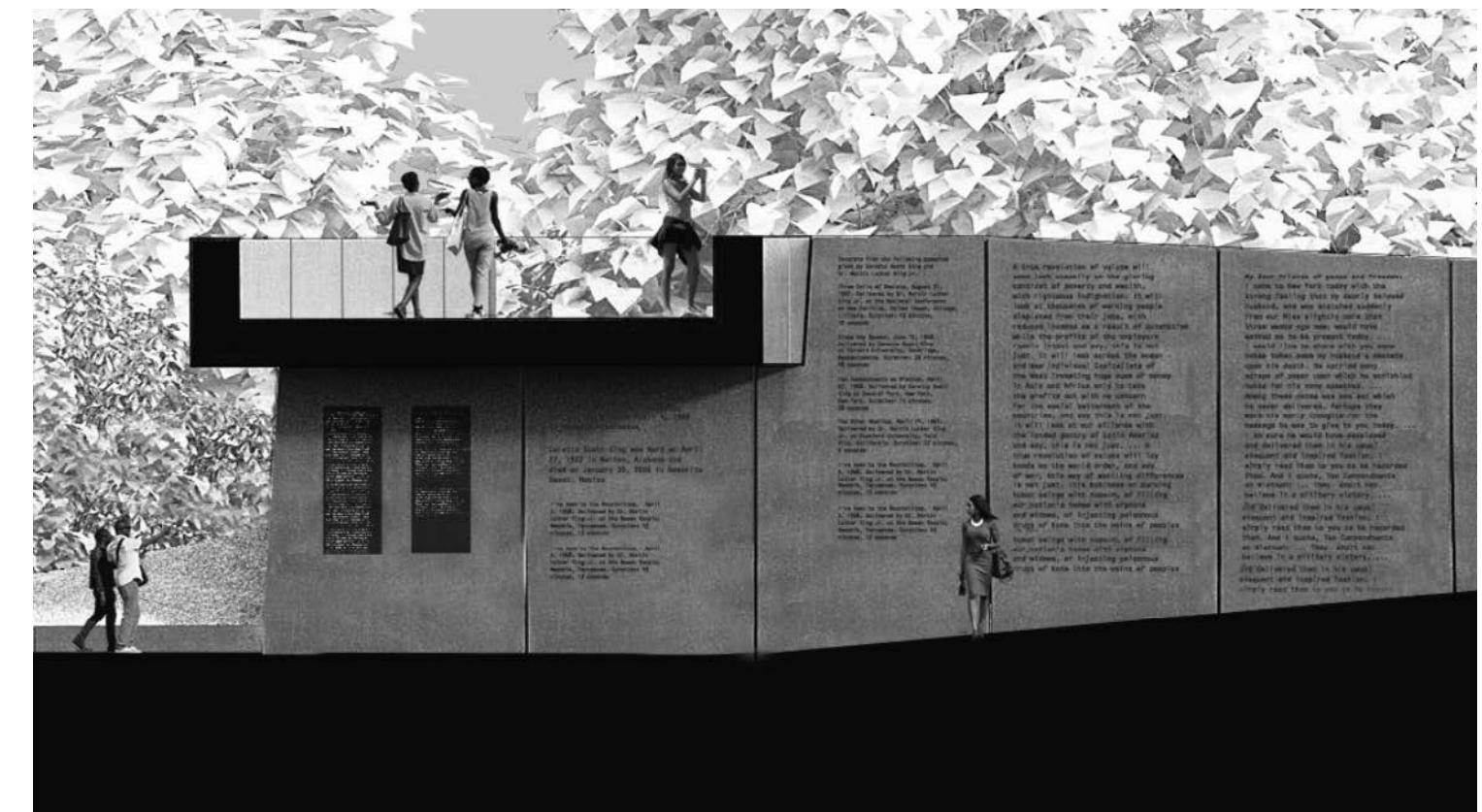
The speeches of the Kings inspired action, and the words they spoke now more than fifty years ago catalyzed a social movement which remains absolutely urgent today. In place of concise quotations typically chosen, we wanted to include the context that surrounded the Kings' spoken words. What did it sound like? How did it feel? What came next? To this end, we selected only generous excerpts and exclusively from the Kings' speeches.

I designed a custom font software, Speech-to-Text, for the project which transcribes audio files into typeset text, registering volume and timing to produce animated letters with varying forms that match the spoken cadence.

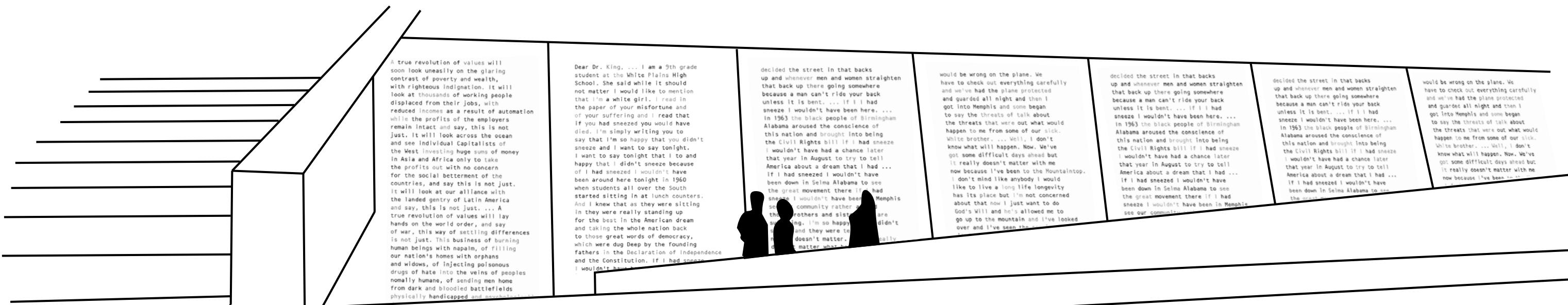
<http://www.o-r-g.com/other/speech-to-text>



The speeches of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King were virtuosic, moving oratory performances. They were calls to action, mobilizing allies in the fight for racial and economic justice. The Kings were everyday people who did extraordinary things. Our proposal memorializes the Kings not through larger-than-life bronze statues, but by bringing their speeches and words to life for current and future generations.



The memorial architecture acts as a bridge leading from the State House's John F. Kennedy statue across Beacon Street into Boston Common, providing accessible entry to the park where none was previously available. As an immersive record of the Kings' vision, the surfaces of the stone memorial are heavily engraved with text from the Kings' speeches.



Public monuments typically use pithy statements and memorable quotes from written accounts. To honor the long-reaching effects of the Kings' words, we chose instead to include long excerpts from their public speeches, not from written sources. The translation of speech into physical text typically falls short. In place of the ubiquitous Roman square capitals carved into stone, I designed Speech-to-Text, a typeface that channels the vitality of the speakers and the era in which they spoke.

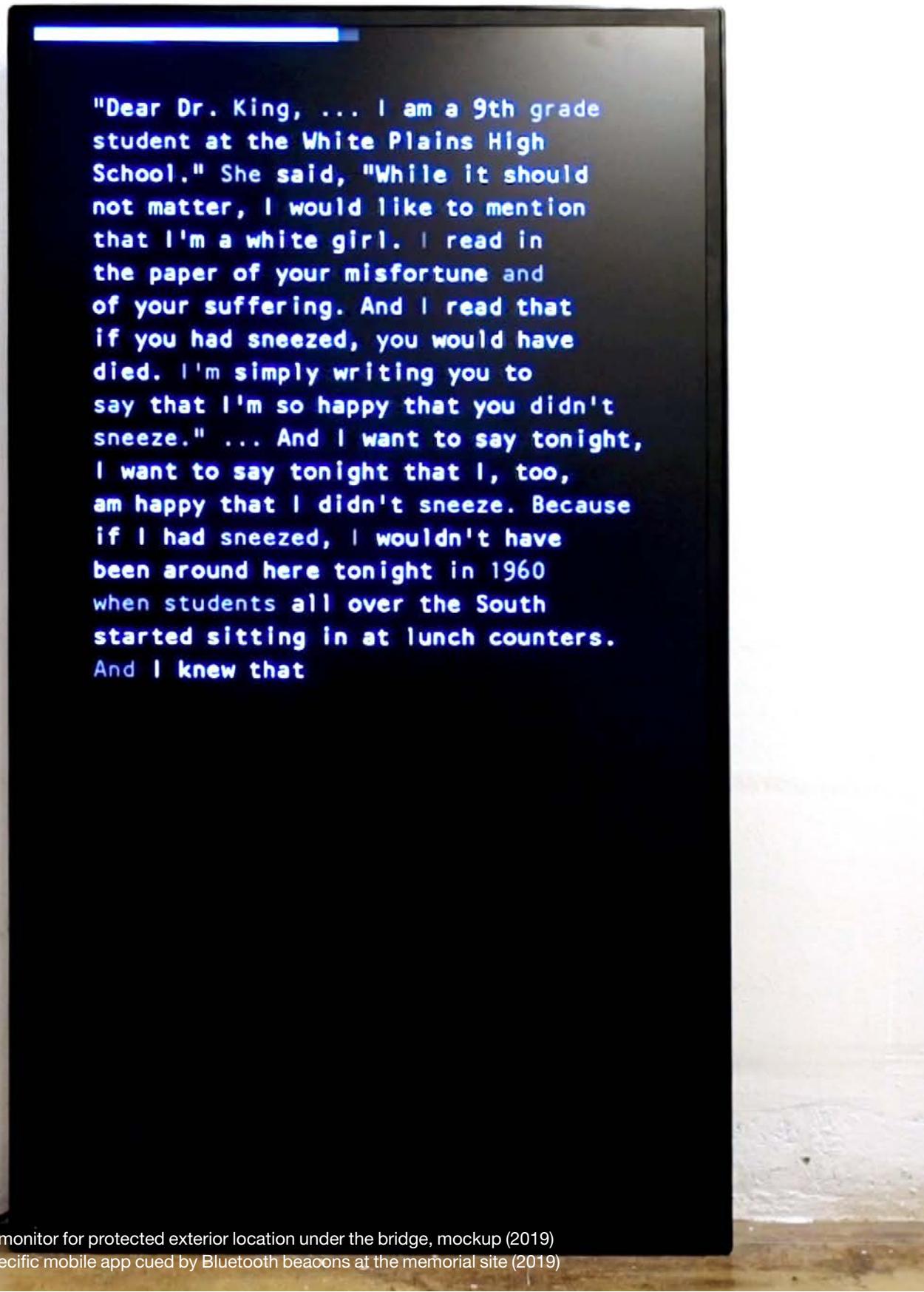
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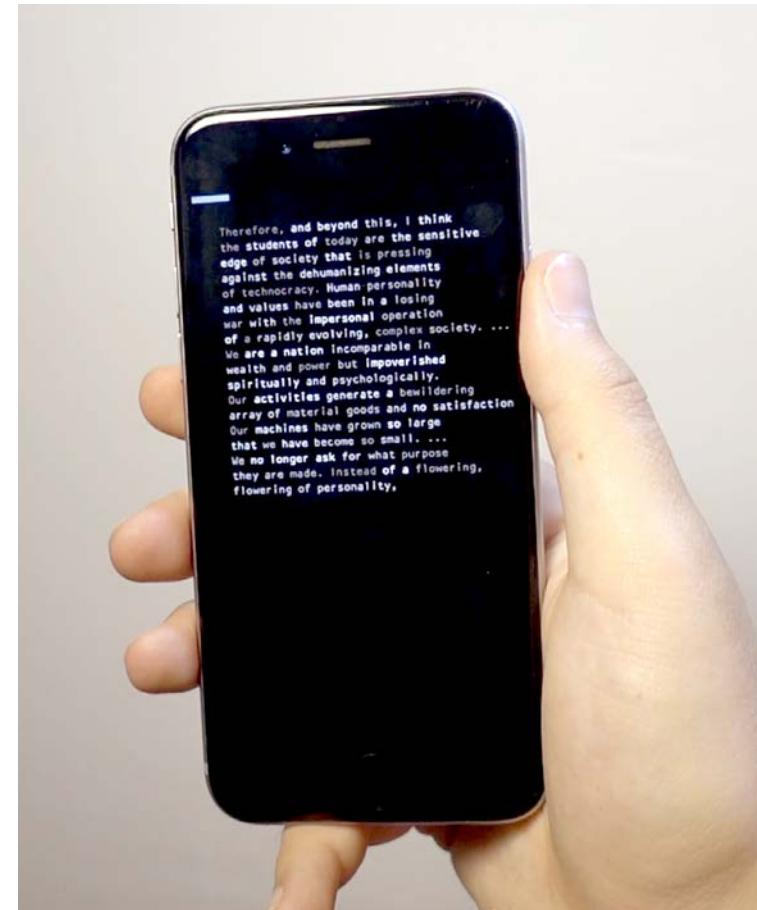
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"Dear Dr. King, ... I am a 9th grade student at the White Plains High School." She said, "While it should not matter, I would like to mention that I'm a white girl. I read in the paper of your misfortune, and of your suffering. And I read that if you had sneezed, you would have died. I'm simply writing you to say that I'm so happy ... that you didn't sneeze." ... And I want to say tonight ... I want to say tonight that I too am happy that I didn't sneeze. Because if I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been around here in 1960, when students all over the South started sitting in at lunch counters. And I knew that as they were sitting in, they were really standing up for the best in the American dream, and taking the whole nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. ... If I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been around here in 1961,



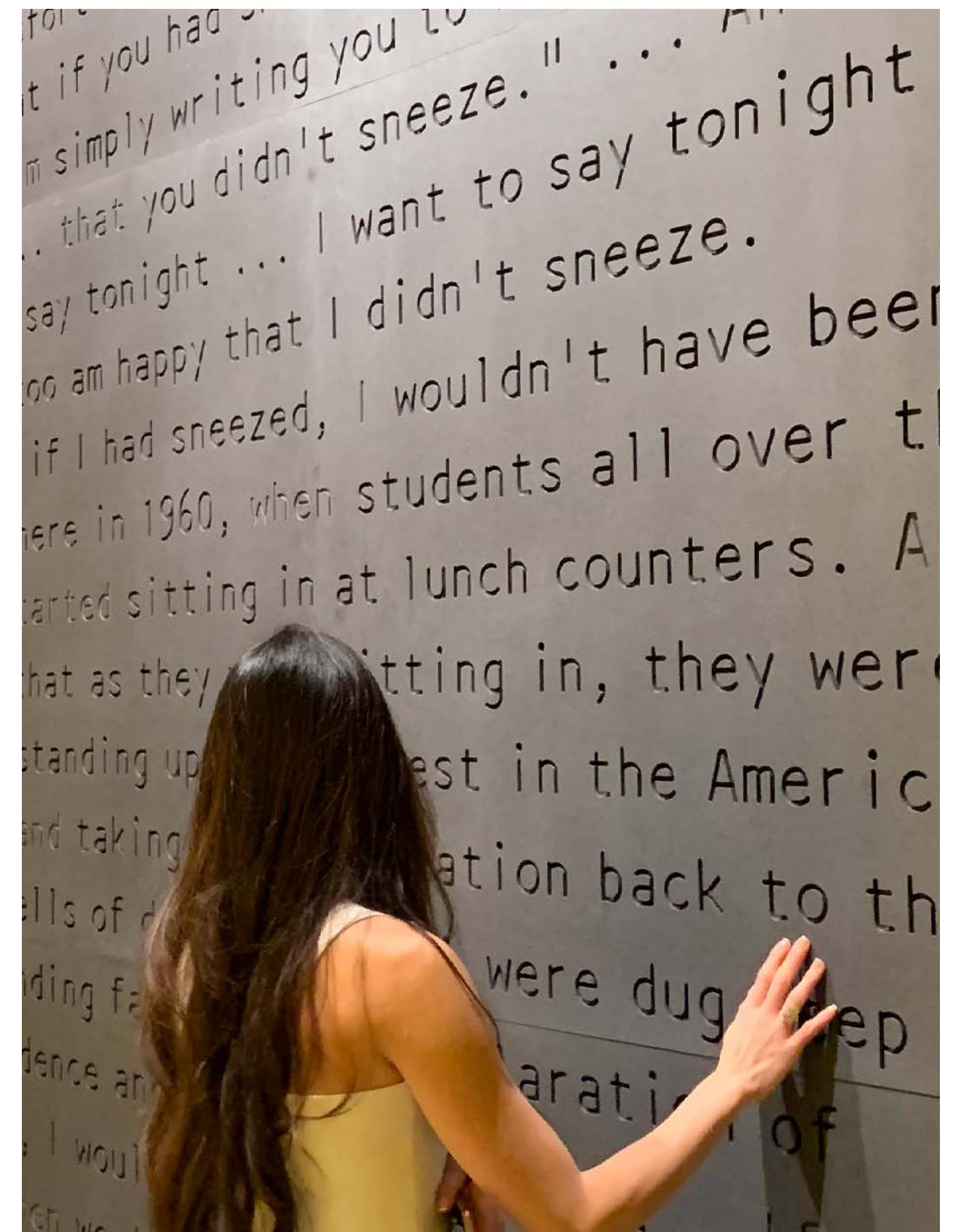
Above: Flatscreen monitor for protected exterior location under the bridge, mockup (2019)
Right: Location-specific mobile app cued by Bluetooth beacons at the memorial site (2019)



Traditional speech transcriptions cannot capture the cadences, the gaps, the musicality, the active unfolding of speaking. Speech-to-Text, however, incorporates these qualities. Using audio waveforms of the Kings' speeches, Speech-to-Text maps spoken emphasis onto the text in the form of variable typographic weights. The type becomes bolder as the recorded voice rises, and lighter as it falls. Across large sections of text, animated in sync with the spoken words, a clear visual sense of the dynamic melodies and rhythms of the language emerges.



Above: IBM Selectric Artisan type ball which served as reference and 3d-printed schematic model (2019)
Right: Full-size mockup of an engraved panel (2019)



The variable weight letters of Speech-to-Text are physically translated at the memorial site as variable depth waterjet-cut text whose relief matches the volume of the spoken word (2019). The long physical inscriptions work together with even longer animated typographic translations of the speeches available on a pair of flatscreen monitors and by a location-specific smartphone app.

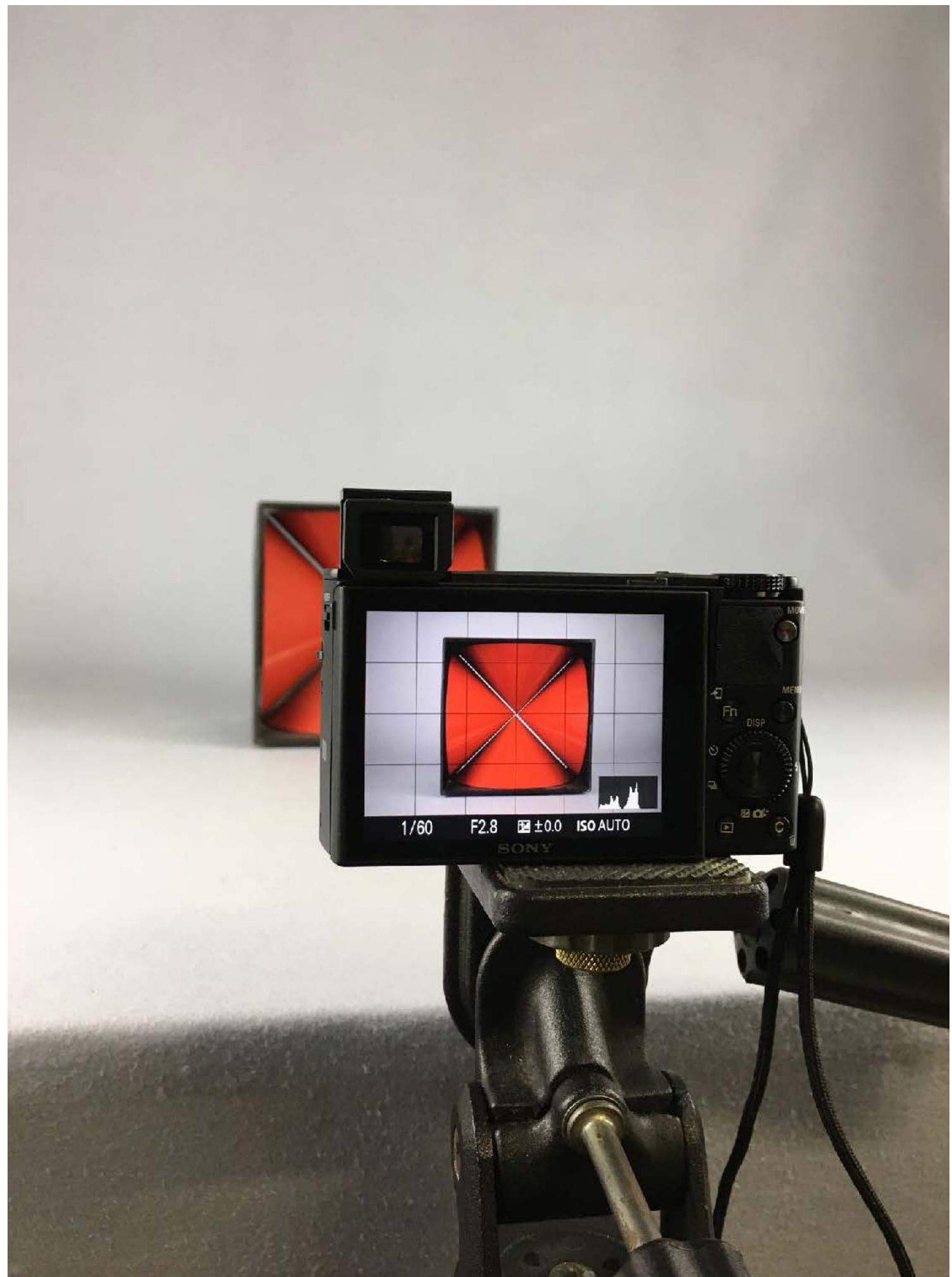
"Dear Dr. King, ... I am a 9th grade student at the White Plains High School." She said, "While it should not matter, I would like to mention that I'm a white girl. I read in the paper of your misfortune, and of your suffering. And I read that if you had sneezed, you would have died. I'm simply writing you to say that I'm so happy ... that you didn't sneeze." ... And I want to say tonight ... I want to say tonight that I too am happy that I didn't sneeze. Because if I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been around here in 1960, when students all over the South started sitting in at lunch counters. And I knew that as they were sitting in, they were really standing up for the best in the American dream, and taking the whole nation back to those great wells of democracy which were dug deep by the founding fathers in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. ... If I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been around here in 1961, when we decided to take a ride for freedom and ended segregation in inter-state travel. If I had sneezed, I wouldn't have been around here in 1962, when Negroes in Albany, Georgia, ...

10. Design as Art as Research (Bruno Munari and the Tetracono)

This design research project revolves around the Tetracono, a product designed in 1965 by Bruno Munari for Danese Milano. Tetracono is an austere 15-cm black steel cube housing four aluminum cones, each painted half-red and half-green, and designed to spin at four distinct speeds on an 18-minute cycle completing a slow transition from green to red. Its function according to Munari is to "show forms while they are in the process of becoming."

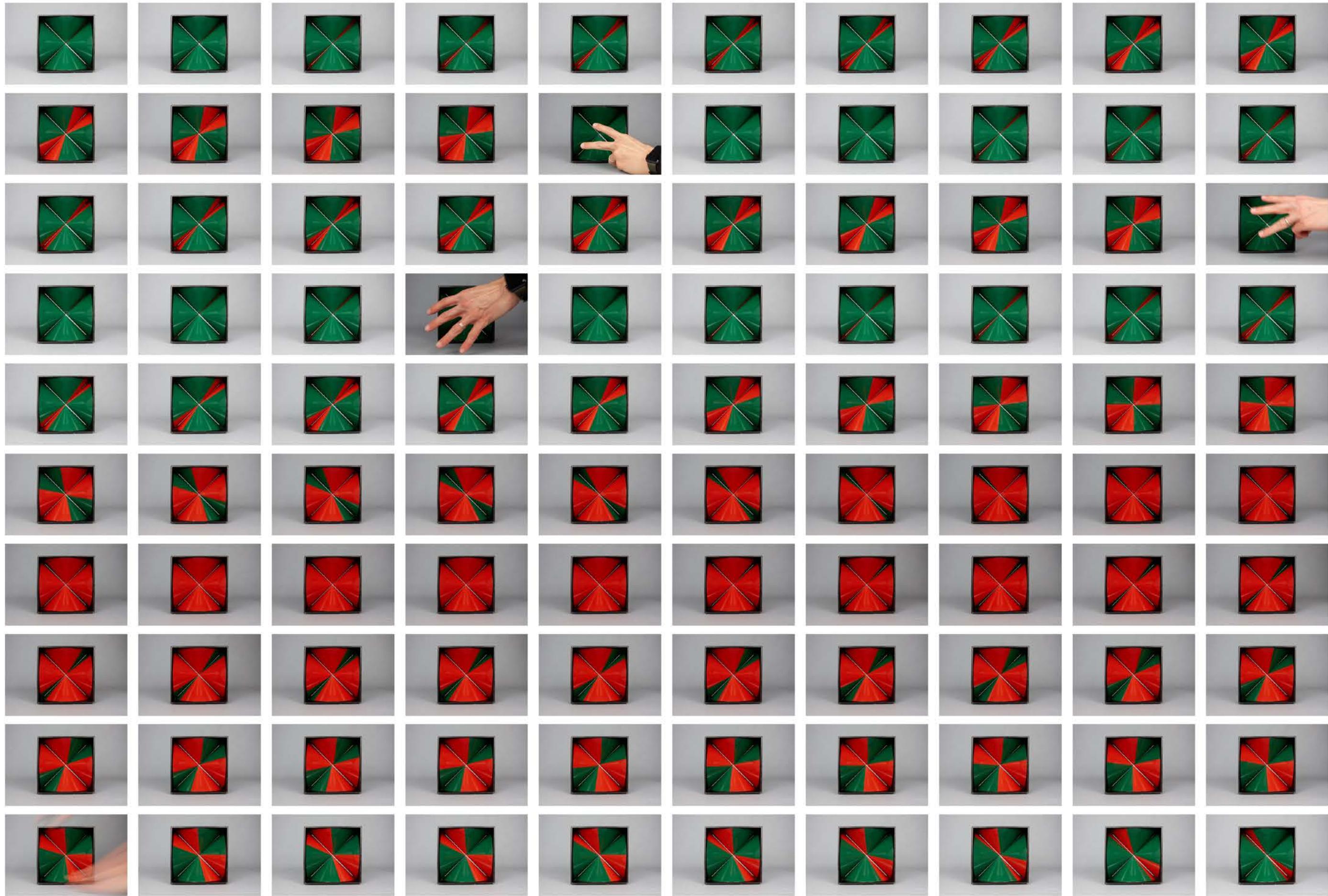
Tetracono was designed as a multiple for mass production, but the engineering was not up to the task and only 10 copies were manufactured. An additional run of 100 copies was produced without motors, relying on the user to animate this transition manually. Both were commercial failures. The status of this work as not quite (or not only) an artwork nor a just piece of design is typical of Munari's art and design practice.

As 2016–2017 Mark Hampton Rome Prize Fellow in Design at the American Academy, I spent six months focused on the Tetracono as a specific case and as a model for thinking about the fertile grey areas between art and design. The research has continued since taking the form of talks at the American Academy (Rome), ECAL (Lausanne), ZKM (Karlsruhe), Hunter College (New York), MIT (Cambridge), RISD (Providence), Carpenter Center (Harvard), and Villa Medici (Rome); two exhibitions at COLLI Independent (Rome); and several texts [published by Walker Art Center](#), ECAL, and elsewhere. My work combines historical research with contemporary making and has sparked a wider conversation about what design research looks like *now.* -



Still photography setup to produce frames for animated video of the Tetracono, in a collector's basement warehouse, Milan (2017)

10. Design as Art Research (Bruno Munari and the Tetracono)



Contact sheet of still frames for animated video of the Tetracono, Milan (2017)

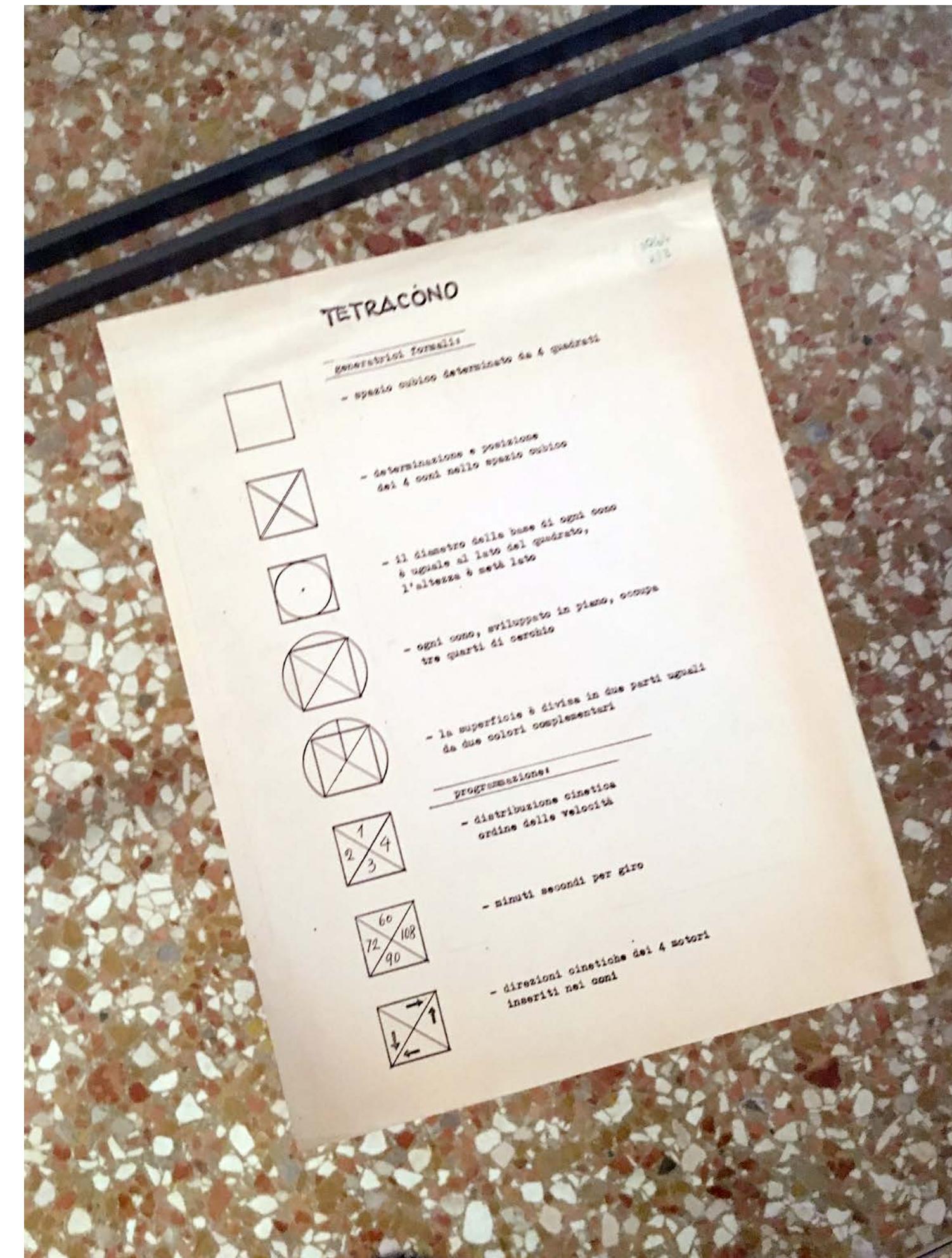
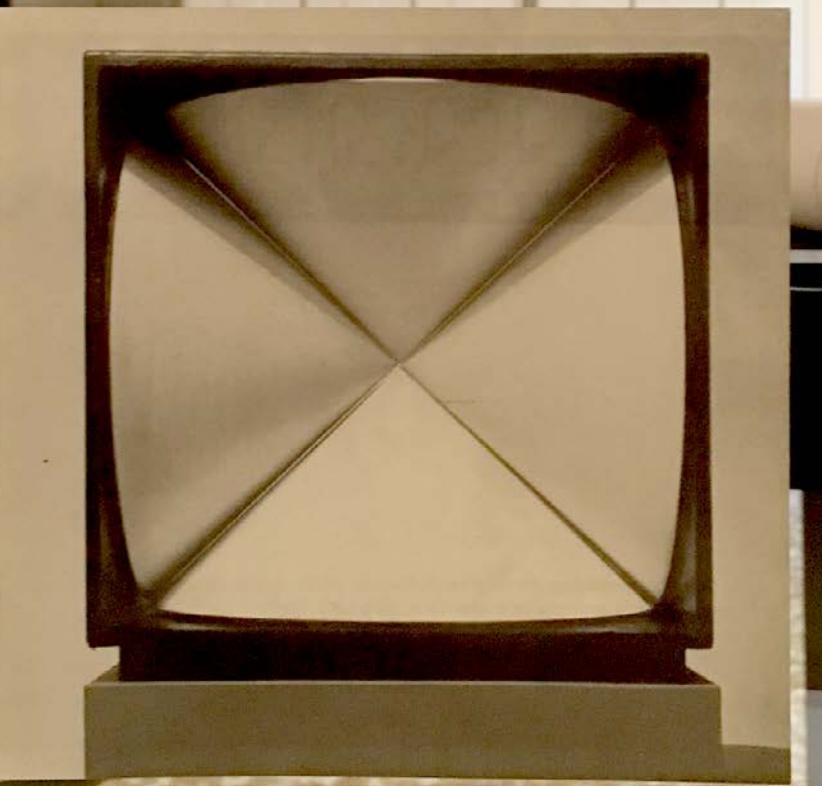
10. Design as Art (Bruno Munari and the Tetracono)



"The Tetracono," stills from animated stopframe video recreating the object's original temporal movement (2017)

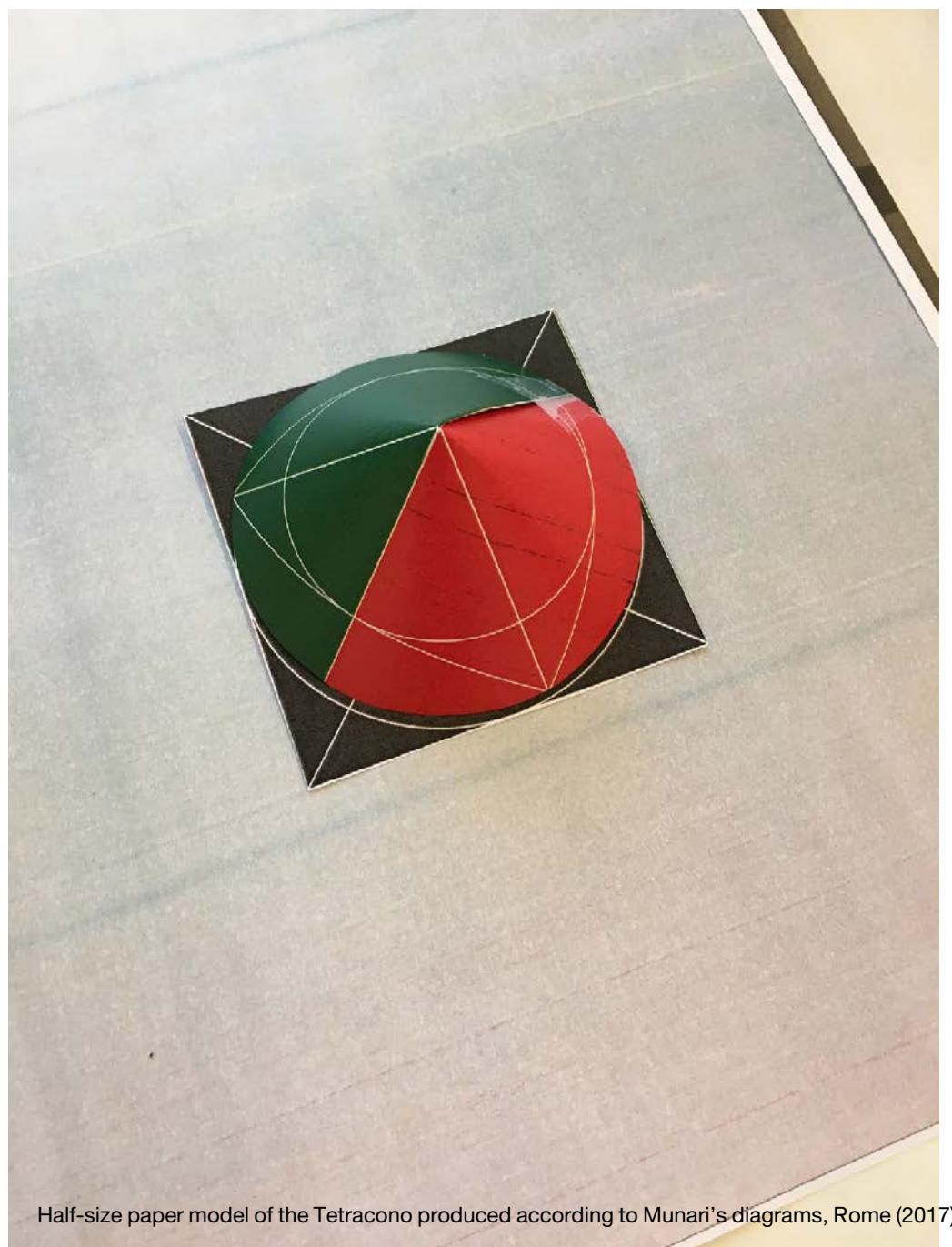
10. Design as Art (Bruno Munari and the Tetracono)



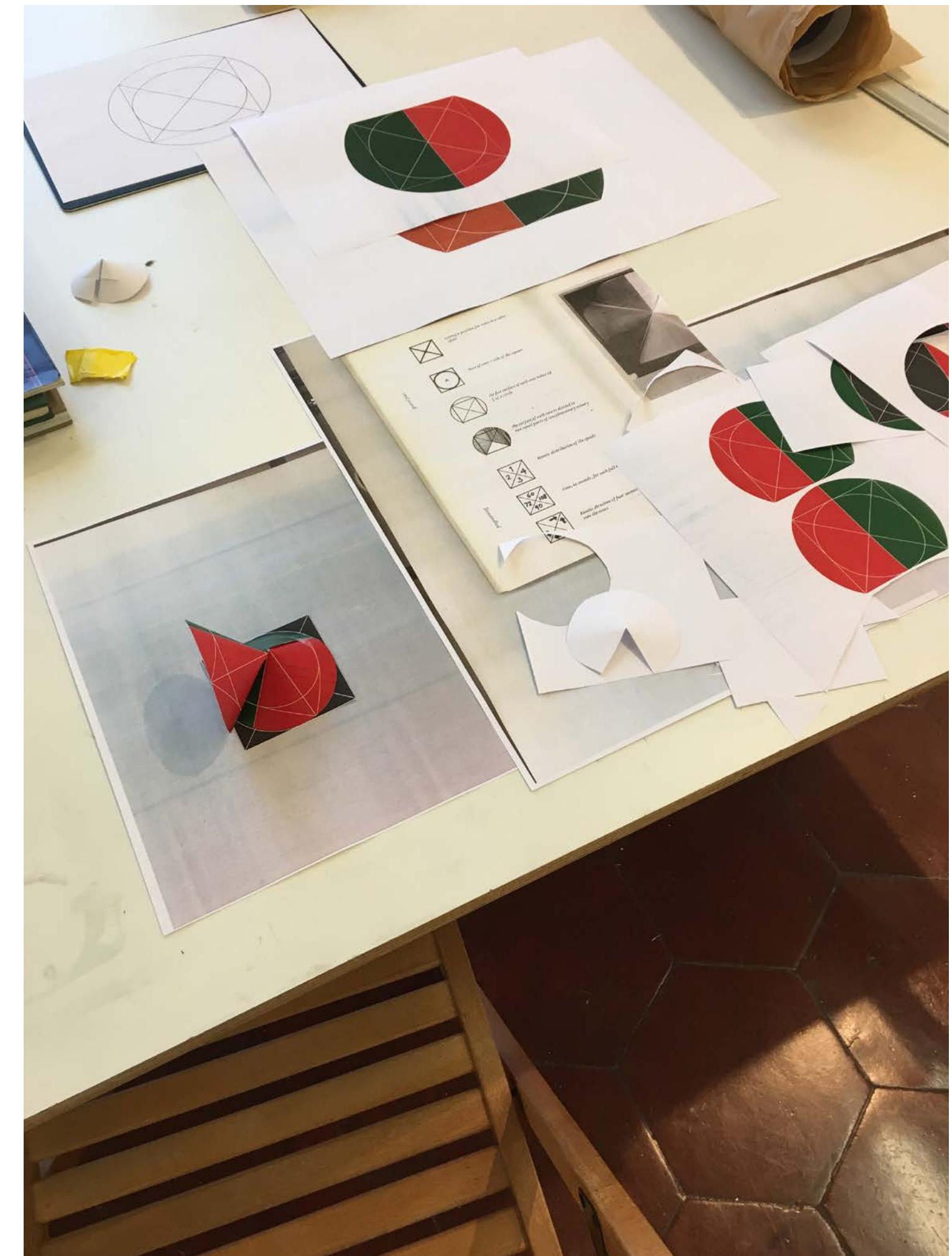


Original printed materials for the Tetracono at the Fondazione Bruno Danese e Jacqueline Vodoz, Milan (2017)

10. Design as Art (Bruno Munari and the Tetracono)



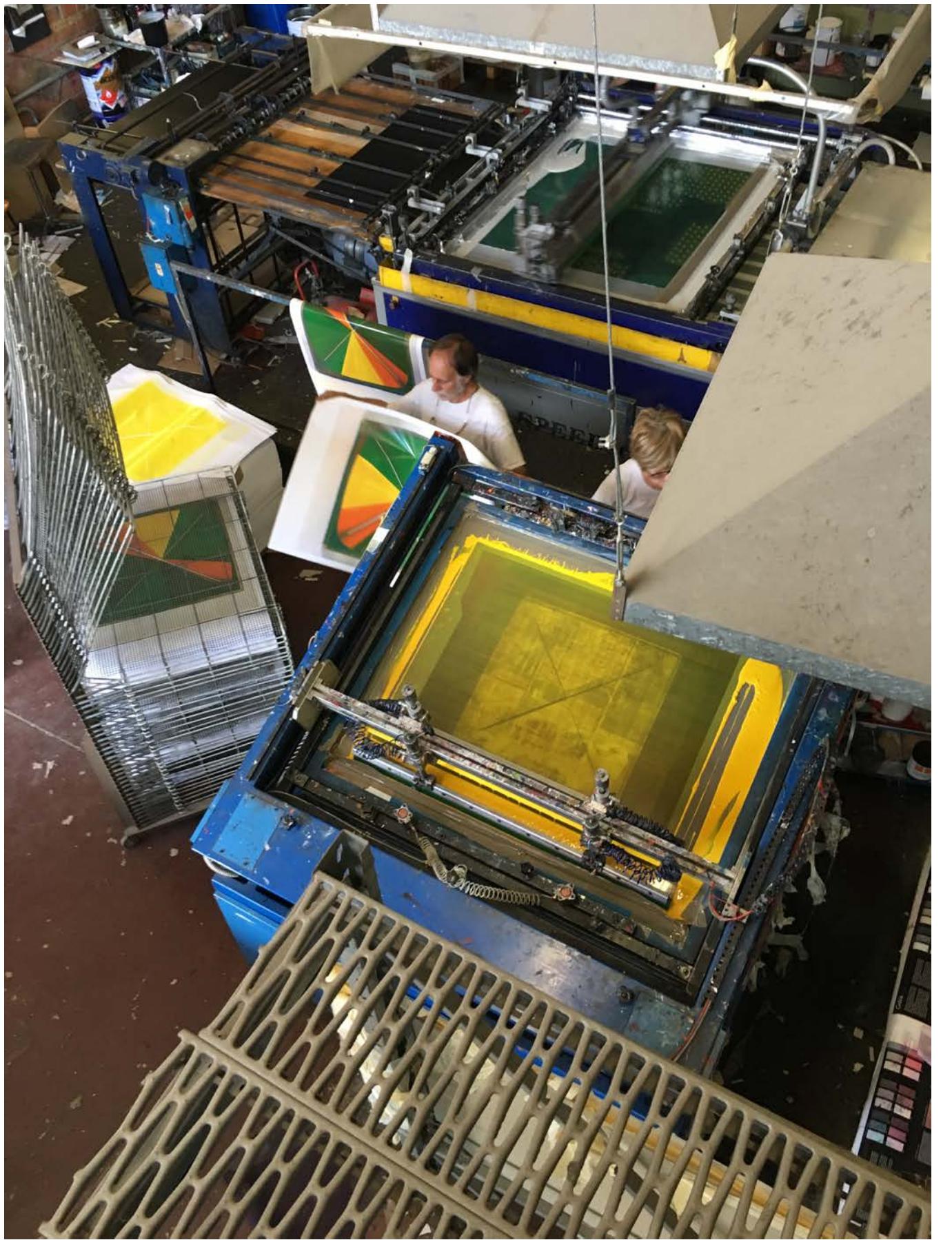
Half-size paper model of the Tetracono produced according to Munari's diagrams, Rome (2017)



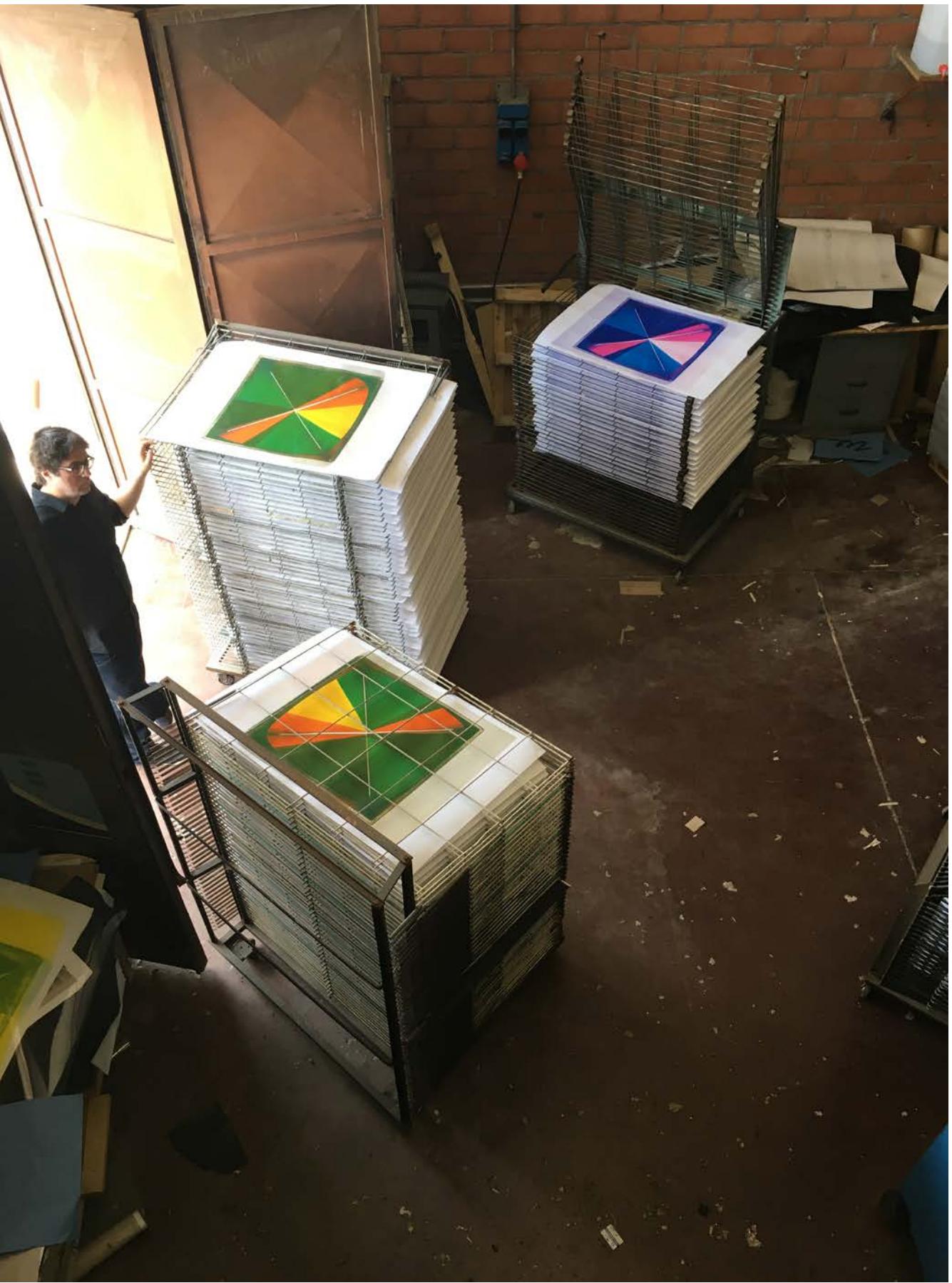
10. Design as Art as Research (Bruno Munari and the Tetracono)



"Stampa Programmata," silk-screen base for a new composite print, Foligno (2017)

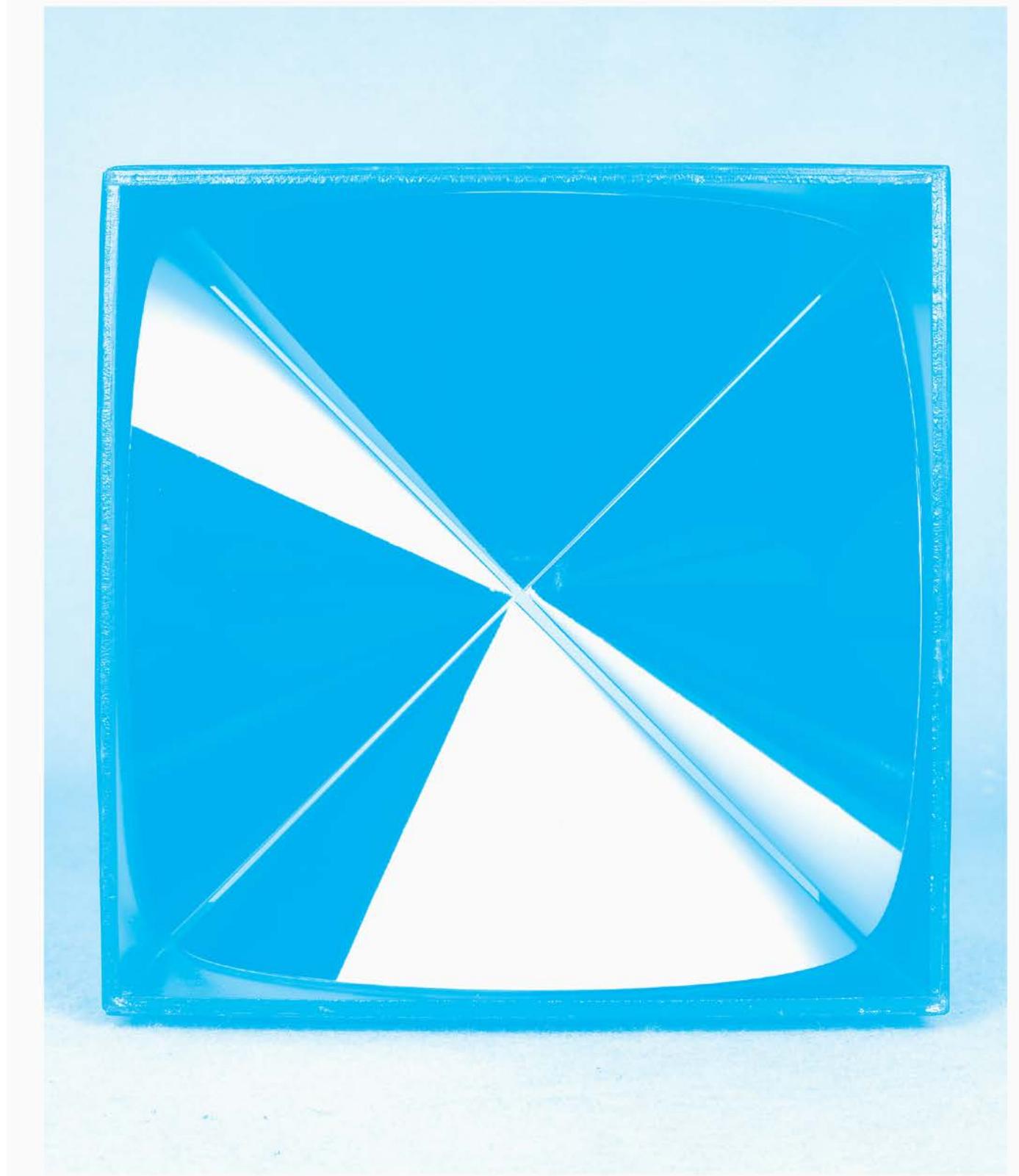


"Stampa Programmata," production in process of a composite print which sandwiches four distinct moments in the Tetracono's 18-minute cycle at an industrial-artisan screen printer, Foligno (2017)



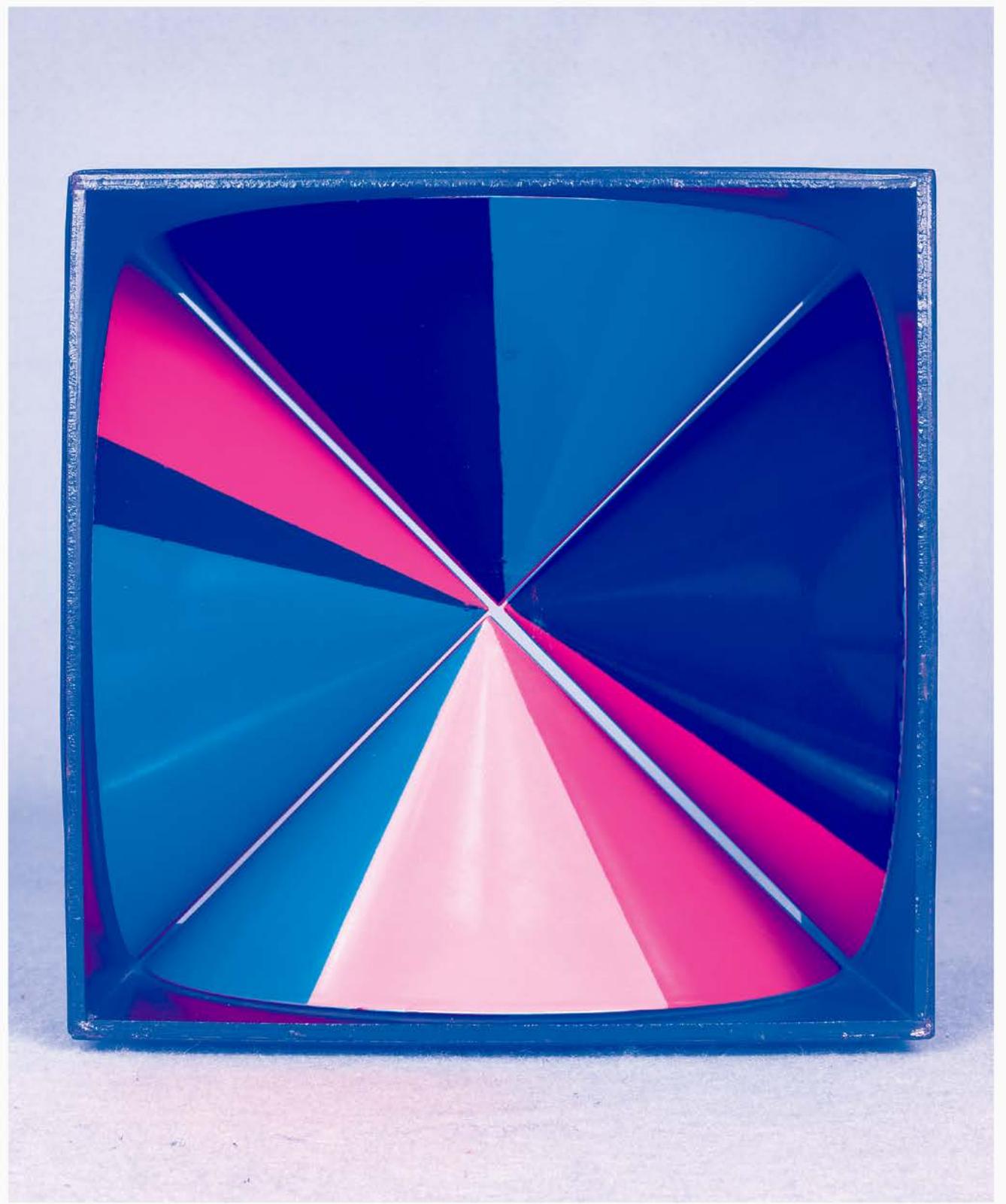
10. Design as Art (Bruno Munari and the Tetracono)

"Stampa Programmata," cyan plate of 4-color silk-screen from 3 minutes into the 18-minute cycle (2017)



Bruno Munari

10. Design as Art (Bruno Munari and the Tetracono)



"Stampa Programmata," magenta plate (w/ cyan) from 6 minutes into the 18-minute cycle (2017)

Bruno Munari

10. Design as Art (Bruno Munari and the Tetracono)



"Stampa Programmata," yellow plate (w/ cyan, magenta) from 9 minutes into the 18-minute cycle (2017)

Bruno Munari

10. Design as Art (Bruno Munari and the Tetracono)

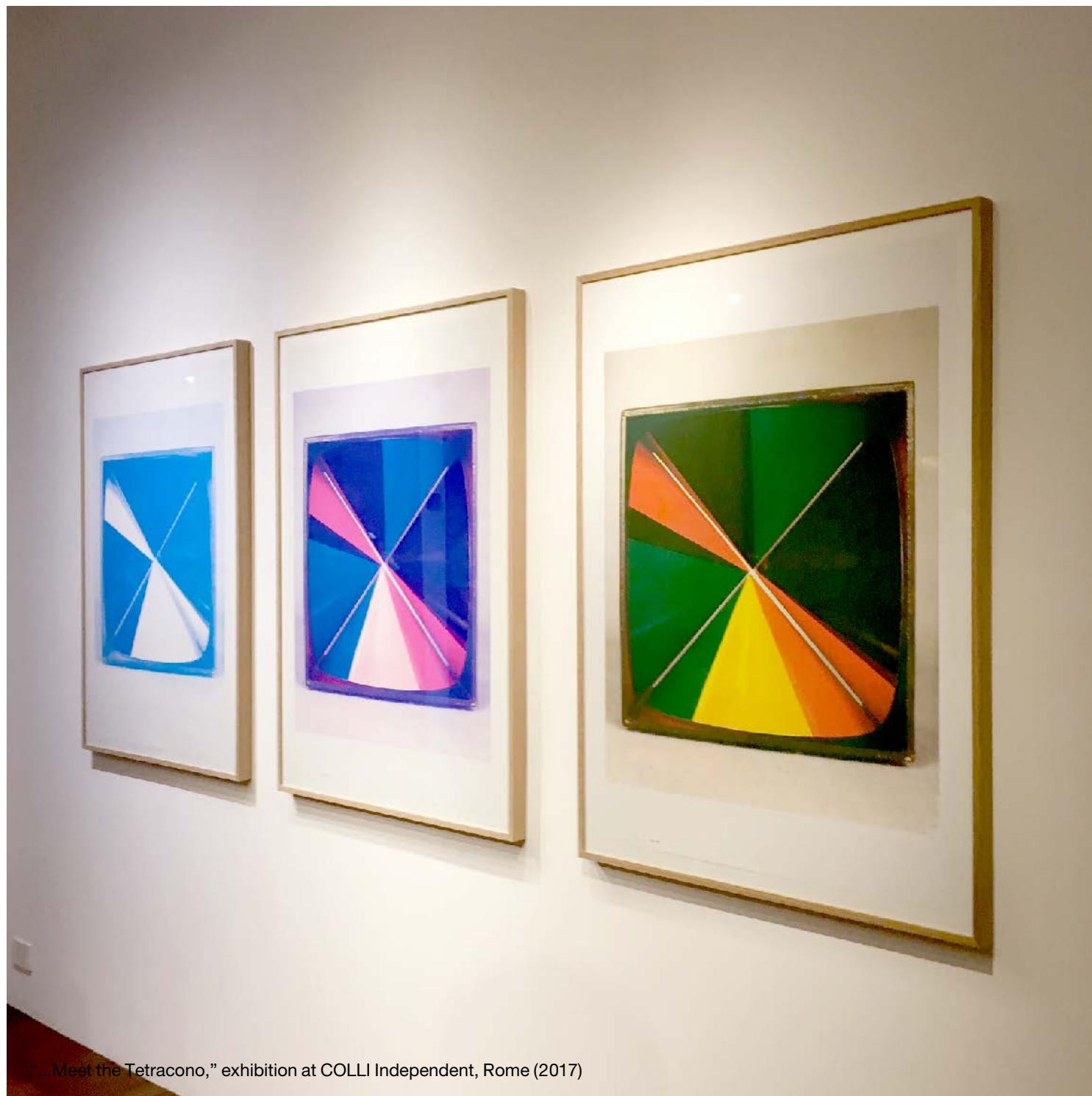


"Stampa Programmata," black plate (w/ cyan, magenta, yellow) from 12 minutes into the 18-minute cycle (2017)

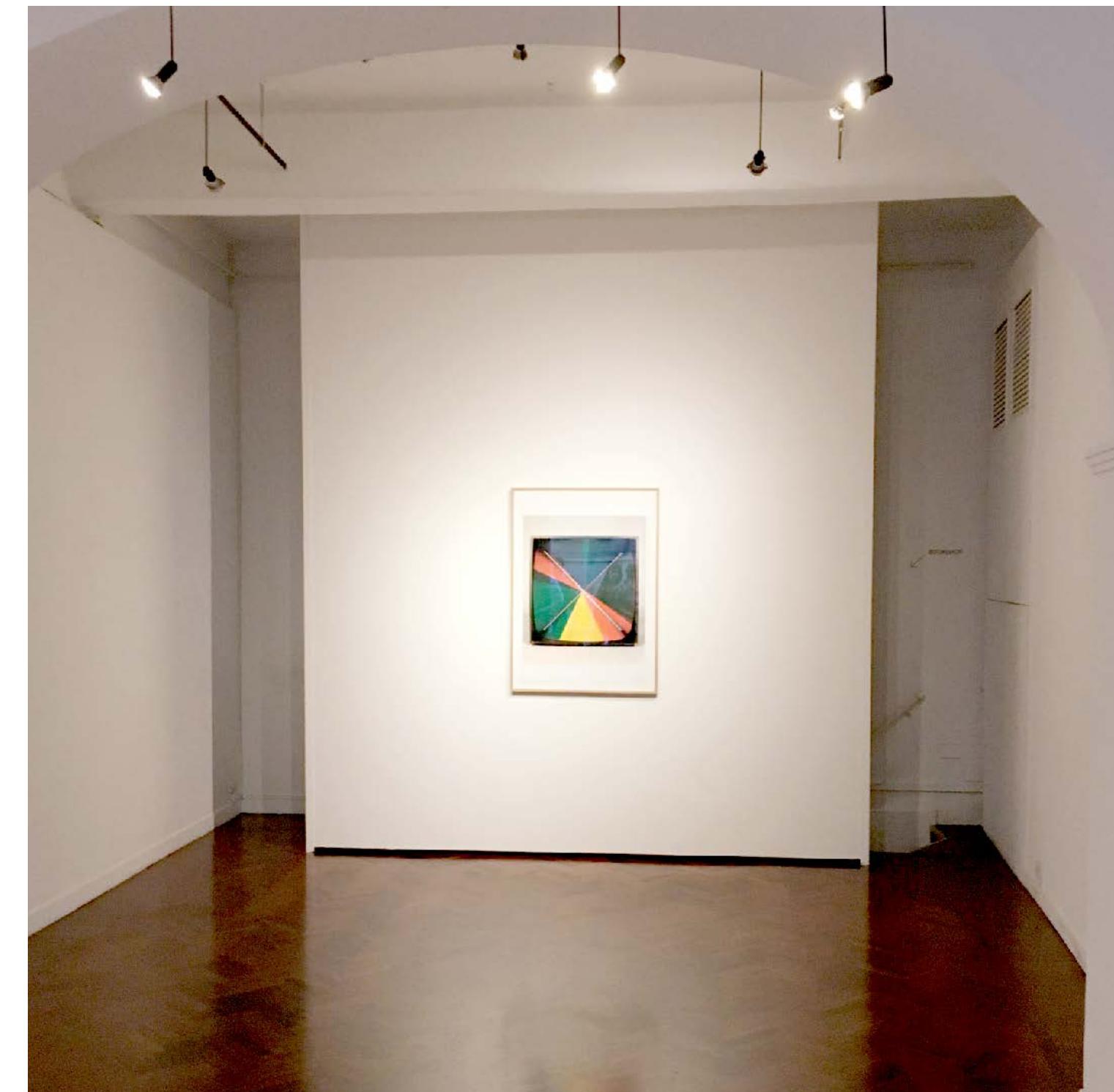
La dimensione temporale è di 1080 minuti secondi. 0000 0000 0000

Bruno Munari

10. Design as Art (Bruno Munari and the Tetracono)



"...Meet the Tetracono," exhibition at COLLI Independent, Rome (2017)

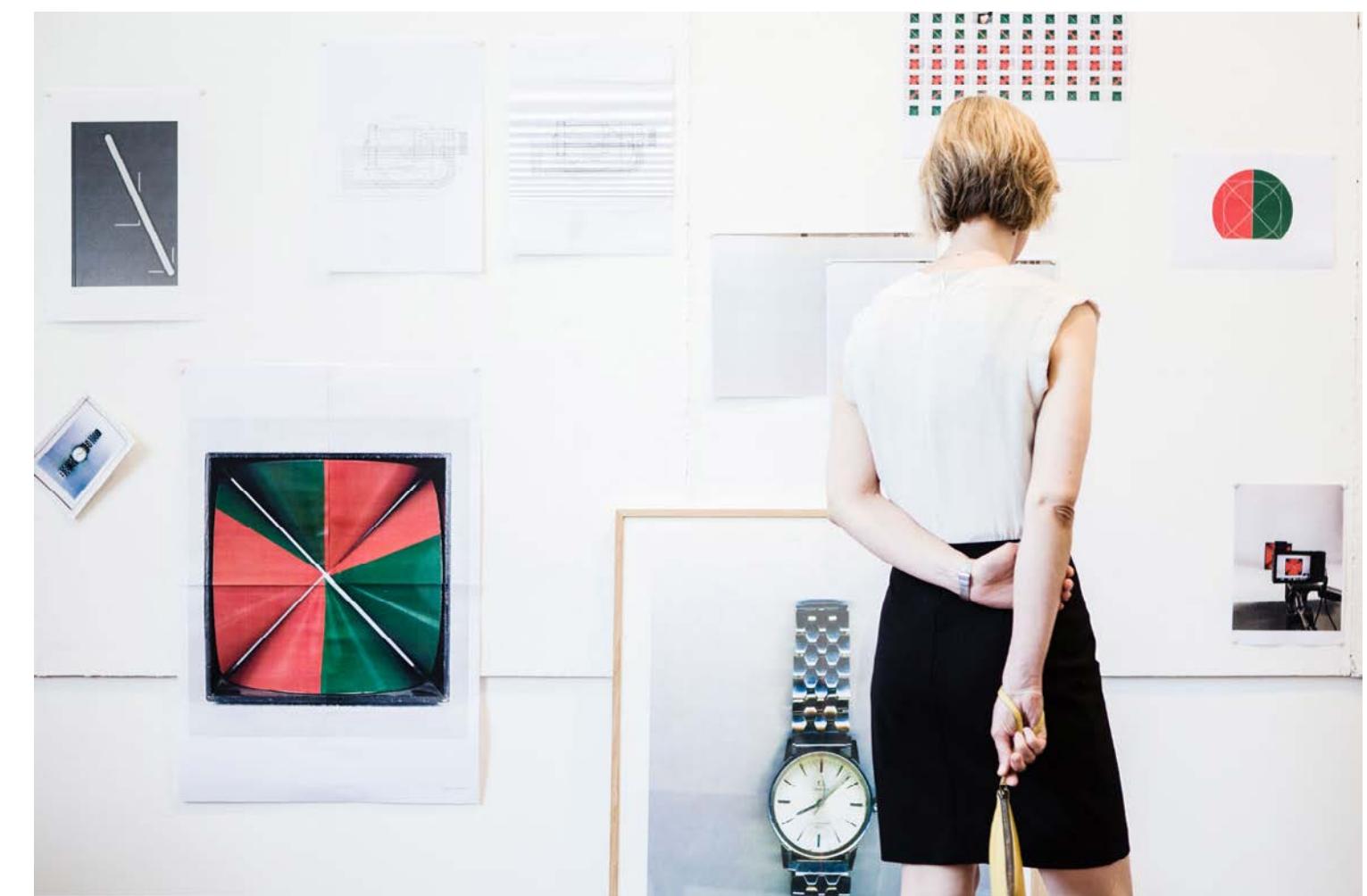


10. Design as Art (Bruno Munari and the Tetracono)



"How to Design (Multiples)," exhibition at COLLI Independent, Rome (2018)

10. Design as Art (Bruno Munari and the Tetracono)



“...Meet the Tetracono,” lecture setup, American Academy, Rome (2017)

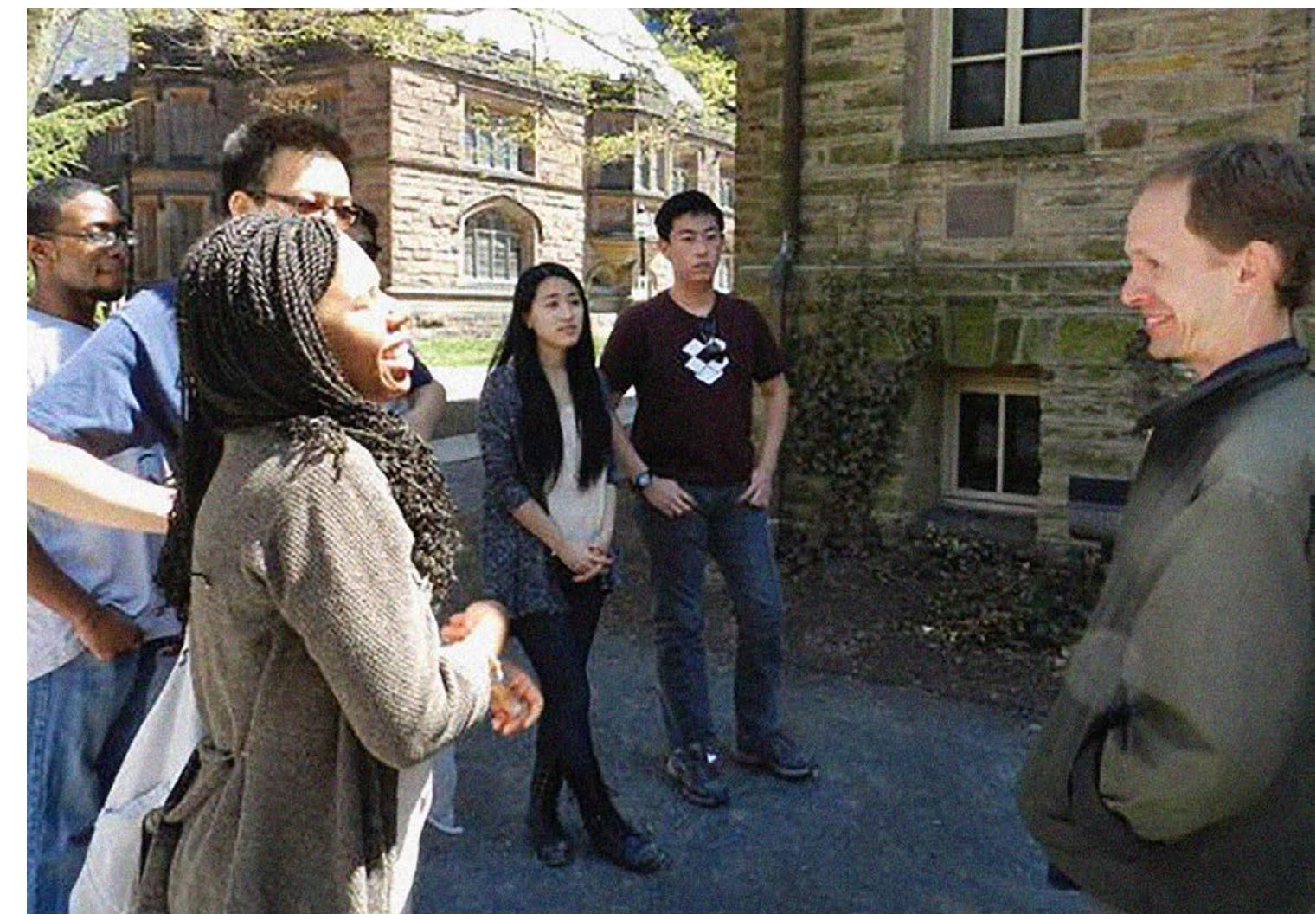
11. A *New* Program for Graphic Design

A *New* Program for Graphic Design was published by Inventory Press (Los Angeles) and Distributed Art Publishers (New York) in 2019. This do-it-yourself textbook with a preface by Adam Michaels and an introduction by Ellen Lupton synthesizes the pragmatic with the experimental and builds on mid-to late-20th-century pedagogical models to convey advanced principles of contemporary design. Rooted in three courses (T-y-p-o-g-r-a-p-h-y, G-e-s-t-a-l-t, and I-n-t-e-r-f-a-c-e) originally developed for liberal arts students at Princeton University, the book provides a broad and comprehensive introduction to graphic design from Benjamin Franklin to Bruno Munari, Moholy-Nagy to Muriel Cooper and the Macintosh computer for readers from any discipline.

In 2010, I was hired to introduce the study of graphic design at Princeton. Ten years later, there are now five overenrolled graphic design courses, several instructors, and a roster of visiting artists. Building on the origin of this material as class lectures, the book was *performed* in Los Angeles over three days in July 2018, where I delivered six 45-minute lectures per day to an assembled audience of students and a general public. Each day constituted one semester's worth of material. These lectures were video recorded, transcribed, edited by Eugenia Bell and Adam Michaels, and lightly re-worked to produce the final book. The resulting text has an offhand quality, somewhere between speaking and writing, which both undermines its authority and invites the reader in to construct it for herself.

An initial print run of 5500 copies sold out in two months. A second edition of 5500 was released in November 2019 and sales continue to be brisk. Chinese and Korean translations are currently in production. Russian, Spanish, German, and Italian editions are being negotiated. The book seems to have found an expansive audience who is curious about what graphic design is and what it can be.

<http://www.a-new-program-for-graphic-design.org>



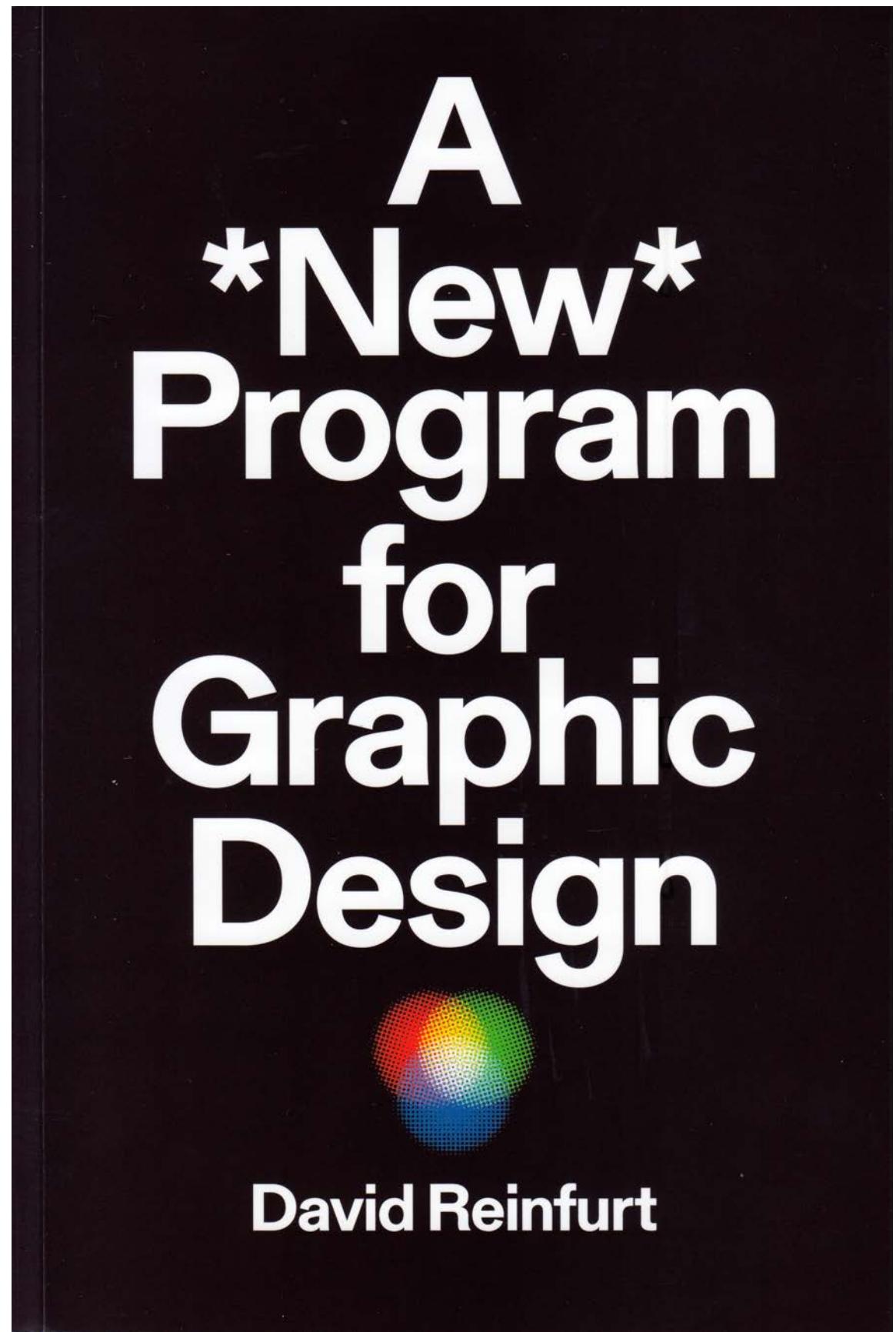
Graphic design students at Princeton University examining class plaques on campus in T-y-p-o-g-r-a-p-h-y (2013)

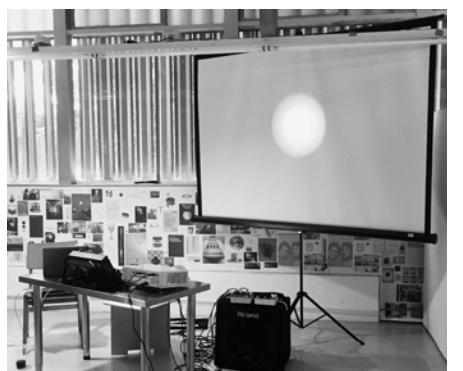


Former offices of Richard Neutra in Silverlake, Los Angeles, venue for three days of staged and video-recorded lectures (2018)



Day 1 (T-y-p-o-g-r-a-p-h-y), day 2 (G-e-s-t-a-l-t), and day 3 (l-n-t-e-r-f-a-c-e) lecture settings, Los Angeles (2018)



Introduction

This is an experiment—that's the first thing to know. And everybody here is part of it. It's maybe a harebrained idea to perform a book rather than write one, but here it is. Each of the next three days will cover one of my graphic design courses at Princeton University, delivered as a consecutive series of slide lectures. All of this will be video-recorded and transcribed to form the basis of a new publication, so that what's said here now is also writing a book elsewhere in the future.

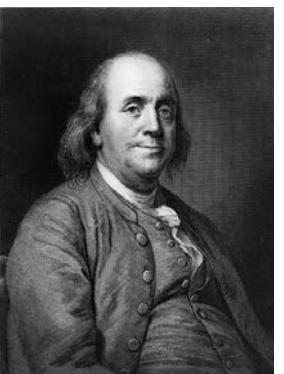
Histories, and figures from them, bleed from one course to the next, alongside some of my own work. This is both by design and a practical consideration. When taking courses I always liked to know where the teacher was coming from so that I had some idea of how to orient myself. This won't be a laundry list of—or “how to do”—graphic design, but rather an attempt to provide a few models of how others have practiced design before. These are models I like. Or that I know about. Or that I've found particularly rich for students. Sometimes these are stories I have stumbled on and followed my instincts toward (or, less generously, indulged my impulses for). It is barely a partial account, entirely idiosyncratic, pragmatic, and ad hoc. I've very often found when teaching that it works better when you model a behavior rather than demonstrate or instruct it. And, so, I hope by suggesting some exemplary practices from the past and knitting those together, as well as collecting examples that might be outside of the scope of what we immediately think of as graphic design, then that also indicates a kind of approach. These interests, cultivated, are what get a design practice moving, and keep it moving. I feel like today you need a solid bit of internal ballast to go against all the forces that want you to operate within a very narrow band. There's just no need to be so limited—there are lots of opportunities—and many new ways—to work as a graphic designer, particularly now.

Eight years ago, the Program in Visual Arts at Princeton University invited me to develop a graphic design course, which didn't exist on campus. Trying to get the new class approved ran into friction at first, with the administration worried that graphic design was simply a trade, applicable to future employment perhaps but not up to the rigor of the rest of the undergraduate curriculum. In some ways, fair enough. Graphic design can be taught as simply a set of skills, emphasizing only mechanical and technical facility. But that's selling it short.

Instead, graphic design can be treated as a liberal art, by which I mean a subject to study, a body of knowledge that, when mastered, informs everything else you think about. Perhaps it's the most liberal of arts—

Postmasters

As it turns out, the day I wrote this was Benjamin Franklin's 300th birthday. Writer, typographer, printer, publisher, politician, inventor, statesman, gentleman scientist, linguist, librarian, and the first Postmaster General of the United States, Franklin was the consummate networker. Distributing his ideas far and wide through a dizzying range of practices, he established a network of printing franchises by sending former apprentices to set up shop in new towns and collecting dues. He traveled extensively to London and to the courts of France, fostering alliances that helped form a nation. He wrote incisive arguments and entertainments under a constellation of pseudonyms including the Causist, Silence Dogood, Busy-Body, Poor Richard, and J. T. to suit the purpose at hand. He advocated for a paper currency to facilitate the liberal distribution of goods and services while he was also a printer and so stood to make money by printing the paper currency which he lobbied for! He was often working both sides of the equation and I think this compromised quality is what I like about about this familiar engraving [↓]—his almost-smirk.



He published a weekly newspaper, an occasional magazine, and the annual *Poor Richard's Almanack*. Along the way, Franklin pursued his polymathic interests, inventing (a partial list): the medical catheter, the

assembly line of content, design, production, and distribution, Franklin offered another approach—the networked tradesman. He was a highly skilled individual, committed to a trade, with an extended network of pre-occupations, assistants, pen names, jobs, friends, politicians, inventions, and hobbies. Look no further than the front page of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, centered at the bottom margin, Franklin proudly added a byline where design, writing, production, and distribution collapse into one space and five words,

Printed by B. Franklin, Postmaster.

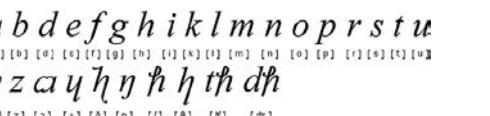
* * *

Beatrice Warde [↓] also used her frontline position in typography as a gateway to injecting her voice into a wider conversation through her writing.



Warde was born in New York City in 1900. Her father was an experimental musician from Germany who developed a chromatic alphabet. Her mother was May Lamberton Becker, a columnist at the *New York Herald Tribune* at the turn of the 20th century. Beatrice was often involved in her mother's work at the *Herald Tribune*, so she had an early appreciation for letters, for typography, for writing, and for editing.

harmonica (a musical instrument), a phonetic alphabet, the circulating stove, swim fins, binoculars, and the lightning rod. He founded the first public lending library, a volunteer fire department, the American Philosophical Society, a university, and was the first Postmaster General of the United States. He was a committed generalist. This is his phonetic alphabet [↓], an attempt to make letters match one-to-one with the sounds of speech.



Benjamin Franklin was born in Boston in 1706, the youngest son of 17 children of Josiah Franklin, a candle maker and merchant. He studied briefly at Boston Latin School before being removed for more practical training. By age 12 he was apprenticed to his older brother James, a printer and publisher of the first independent colonial newspaper, the *New-England Courant*.

Initially, young Benjamin assisted with page composition, typesetting, leading, brushing, burnishing, and miscellaneous production tasks, receiving an intimate education the mechanics of printing. James' busy shop was a nexus of pamphleteering. This was where you would come to engage in civic politics, to lobby for your point of view because this was also where your point of view would be printed and multiplied. Franklin realized this pretty quickly. The *Courant* provided the most widely distributed communication platform in Boston. As an increasingly competent writer himself, Franklin wished to add his voice to the public discourse circling around the print shop, but he knew his older brother wouldn't consent to print his writing, so he tried another tactic. Franklin assumed the alter ego Mrs. Silence Dogood, the dignified widow of a country parson. Writing under the pseudonym, he crafted a series of letters that were both entertaining and critical of Boston's Puritan establishment. Given his insider knowledge of the *New-England Courant* production schedule, Franklin carefully slipped the letters under the front door of the shop late at night.

The writing was funny and the content substantial. James Franklin published the first of 19 Silence Dogood letters on April 2nd, 1722.

They still do, and it remains extensively used throughout academic publishing particularly mathematics, science, and computer science. TeX is powerful, simple enough, and a pleasure to work with [↓].



It uses a markup language, something like HTML. Heads, subheads, and body are identified by the author. Bold and italics indicated. Semantic relationships in the text are tagged and then TeX does the dirty work of formatting the text. TeX was designed for mathematics, so formulas can be entered directly and TeX will typeset it correctly. Setting mathematics manually is tedious, so this was a boon. TeX also appeared considerably before other digital typesetting softwares and many of its fundamental algorithms, particularly for setting justified type, were incorporated into a series of consumer softwares from Aldus FrameMaker to PageMaker to Quark Xpress to Adobe InDesign.

METAFONT

Knuth designed a second program to work with TeX as a helper app. Metafont [↓] is a tool for designing and generating typefaces by describing them mathematically. TeX puts type on a page and Metafont draws that type. Metafont also runs on its own. It's built on the underlying metaphor of handwriting and uses a skeleton form for each letter specified as a set of related parametric equations. Here's [↓] a skeleton for the letter "A".



Metafont then traces this using a software "pen" to make the letter. A thin round pen looks like this [↑]. A chisel pen [↑] at 30° like this. And a heavy round pen with points shifted right looks like this [↗].

Knuth created Metafont software in order to mathematically describe a typeface he called Computer Modern and then to use it as the default type for TeX. He soon realized that letterform design was considerably more difficult than he expected. He recruited experts including Hermann Zapf to help him along. Here's a clipping of Knuth and Zapf studying a Computer Modern ligature on February 14, 1980 [↓].



An early version of the numbers from Computer Modern drawn by Metafont demonstrate a few issues [↓]. The "8" is particularly wonky.

0123456789

Because Metafont defines a set of related points as a program, and because it uses that program to generate letters on the fly, then Metafont can also *change how it behaves as it runs.* So it's possible to, for example, typeset the digits of Pi so that they get smaller and smaller receding into infinity [↓].

3.14159265358979...

Letters could be adjusted to coarser or finer resolutions. And randomness could even be injected into the letterforms directly. I'm not sure why

After homeschooling until age twelve, Warde was sent to Horace Mann School, a progressive academy in New York City. She whizzed through her classes in Greek and Latin, everyday skills, and public service. She graduated in two years. From Horace Mann she went to Barnard College, which was a part of Columbia University. There she studied English, French, Latin, writing, and philosophy, among other subjects. Warde was something of a prodigy.

While at Columbia she met Frederic Warde. He was a printer and she was interested in typography. They married, and soon after graduating she went to work in the library of the American Type Founders Company in New Jersey [↓].



She was tasked with keeping track of all the type samples being made by the foundry, where they were producing not only the letters that others were using to print, but also books about typography. Soon Warde was the head librarian and the foundry's default publicist. She started to communicate widely about what the American Type Founders library held and why it mattered.

This stands as a sketch for the future.

What follows is a work in progress, the product of one year at MIT's Center for Advanced Visual Studies tracing the legacy of graphic designer Muriel Cooper [↓]. It's organized as a guided tour of various sites on the campus of MIT, attempting to track 40 years of Cooper's work across different departments within the university.



Muriel Cooper always sought more responsive systems of design and production, emphasizing quicker feedback loops between thinking and making, often blurring the distinction between the two. OK, let's go ahead and get started.

1. An accidental archive at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies

We begin in a locked closet housing a collection of posters, documents, videotapes, and related printed matter which forms a de facto archive of the Center for Advanced Visual Studies. Embarking on a client-design relationship with the Center, I arrived in Cambridge to spend a few days going through the archive and examining its contents.

The Center for Advanced Visual studies was set up in 1967 by György Kepes as a fellowship program for artists. Initiated with considerable institutional and financial support, the Center produced artworks, exhibitions,

and public programs that were often accompanied by a poster or publication. These posters [↓] provide an immediate, condensed, and visually legible accidental archive of its almost four-decade history.



While working my way through the contents of the closet, I was struck immediately by the surface qualities of this extraordinary set of posters. It was not simply the graphic design nor the typography that caught me—rather it was their mode of production. The design of the posters changed sporadically as new designers or administrators appeared, but what remains the same is the way each self-consciously incorporates its production method into the design.



For example, this poster [↑] revels in the extreme enlargement of a small

So, it starts like this:

I stand at the window and see a house, trees, sky. Theoretically I might say there were 327 brightnesses and nuances of color. Do I have 327? No, I have sky, house, and trees. It's impossible to achieve 327 as such. And yet even though such droll calculation were possible and implied—say for the House, 120, the trees, 90, the sky, 117—I should at least have this arrangement and division of the total not say 127 and 100 or 150 and 177. The concrete division which I see is not determined by some arbitrary mode of organization lying solely within my own pleasure. Instead I see the arrangement and division which is given there before me [v].



And what a remarkable process it is when some other mode of apprehension does succeed. I gaze for a long time from my window, adopt after some effort the most unreal attitude possible, and I discover that part of the window sash and part of a bare branch together compose an "N." Or look at a picture.



Two faces cheek-to-cheek [↑]. I see one with its, if you will, 57 brightnesses and the other 49 brightnesses. I did not see an arrangement of 66 plus 40 nor 6 plus 100. There have been theories which would require I see 106. In reality I see two faces. Or I hear a melody, 17 tones with its accompaniment, 32 tones. I hear the melody and accompaniment not simply 49 and certainly not 20 plus 20 plus 9. And the same is true even in cases where there is no stimulus continuum. I hear the melody.



to work in reverse. Instead of slowing down the scanner or image-making apparatus, we would slow down the display of time across the face of the watch.

Digital watches typically use a quartz crystal that, when electricity is introduced, resonates at a certain frequency and drives the watch. Quartz is used because it has a very stable resonant frequency and this keeps it running at the correct rate. The display moves across the face left to right, drawing each number segment by segment over time. (It takes time to tell the time.) The existing Casio F91 watches already drew each segment at different moments, but it all happens too fast to visually register. A new circuit board—the watch's brain—was designed and installed which would slow down the left-to-right drawing, producing a slowed-down display as a kind of inverted watch scan. The new watch relies on the Gestalt principle of being able to hold a sequence of images in your head even if it's distended in time.



Here's the finished product [↑]. Because the digital display is slowed down and it draws left to right, at any one moment the watch shows only part of the current time. The display speed is adjustable, however, and you're instructed to set the display as slow as possible so that you can still read the time. This should mark the limits of your perception, and it should be at the tipping point where the time is no longer legible.

These two projects are related, superficially by both being watch face design projects, but more emphatically they both have to do with the holding of a temporal sequence in your head over time as one gestalt—like a melody, or a sequence of discrete frames in a film.

* * *

Watch faces and temporal displays are something graphic designers are often tasked with. In 1984, the Apple Macintosh was introduced. It was a personal, portable computer driven by a one-button mouse and the first consumer-facing graphic user interface. There was no existing visual precedent for communicating the novel user interactions of the powerful new machine, and so everything had to be invented from scratch.



Susan Kare [↑] is a designer based in San Francisco. She was the designer of the original visual language for the Macintosh interface. Kare was invited by Apple engineer Bill Atkinson and it seems she arrived to the project with very few preconceptions.

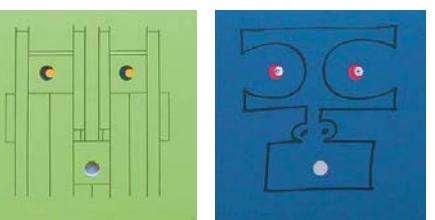
One interaction problem which needed to be solved with graphic design was called "perceived responsiveness"—something that lets you know the computer is thinking. The first Macintosh was small and slow. You turned it on, booted it up from a floppy disk, and waited for a while, and you needed to know that you needed to wait.

Whenever the computer processor was busy, the user needed to be reassured that the computer was indeed working. This "wait cursor" was mission-critical for the user experience. The animated icon that Kare

A figure by French artist and designer Sonia Delaunay wears a triangular skirt; a decorative element drawn with a compass sits on a triangle base; or a snowflake seen under a microscopic structure revealing its internal three-part structure; the Hitite signs for a city and for a king are both triangles in that ancient writing system; the Mercedes-Benz logo is a circle divided by three. Each image includes a short caption. Munari uses this simple formal device, a triangle, to hop across gaps in time and in culture. The result is a book of design research driven by a visual form which motivates that form as a tool to navigate across wide categorical registers. Deep history and contemporary graphics are presented equivalently, and this equivalence allows an associative and lateral way of looking.

There are serious limitations to this approach, but for Munari it offered a way to keep his practice moving, always on to the next thing. This directed movement is particularly necessary in a design practice, where clients, deadlines, and technical constraints often conspire to assert their demands. Designers need their own inner compass or may quickly find themselves blown off course.

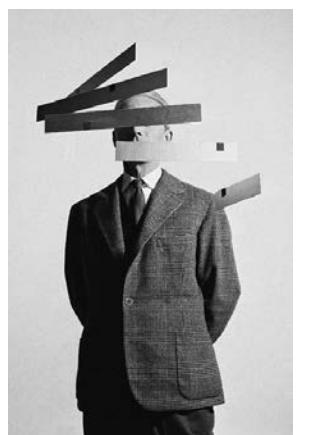
Meanwhile, Munari continued. In 1969, he published *Look Into My Eyes*. It's a square-format children's book that is still in print. The eyes and mouth are cut out, so that the loose pages are meant to act as masks. But stack the pages in any order and new eyes appear, one face showing through to the other [↓]. It's a rich inventory of faces and also a formal study of possibilities.



Munari described his Useless Machines as vehicles for understanding transformations. They are constellations of small objects connected discreetly by string, hung, and in perpetual motion and constant self-rearranging. They're not decorative objects, instead they're meant to

be contemplative, even didactic, models for considering how one form moves into another. Munari [↓] made "useless machines" for 50 years and they were central to his practice. He even starts the preface to *Design as Art* from 1966 by introducing himself this way:

Lots of people know me as, "You know, the man who made the useless machines."

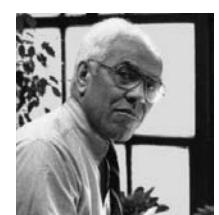


And continues,

... even today I still occasionally get asked one of these objects which I designed and made about 1933. That was the time when the movement called the *novecento italiano* ruled the roost with its high court of super serious masters and all the art magazines spoke of nothing else but their grand artistic productions, and everyone laughed at me and my useless machines. They laughed all the harder because my machines were made of cardboard painted in plain colors, sometimes a glass bubble, while the whole thing was held together with the frailest of wooden rods and bits of thread.

ABC, TV, NeXT

This is George Corrin [↓]. He practiced for 60 years as a set designer, a product designer, a graphic designer, and an exhibition designer. But he also almost didn't do any of those things.



Applying to Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1942, Corrin was brushed off with a curt note from the dean saying, "Negro students have not found the work of our department satisfactory to their needs," and suggested that he apply instead to Fisk University, a historically African American school in Nashville, Tennessee. Corrin replied with a cascade of recommendation letters and the school reversed its decision, admitting him as its first African American student. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa from what would become Carnegie Mellon University and went on to study set design at Yale University School of Drama, receiving an MFA in 1951. After a brief tour of military duty in the South Pacific, Corrin landed a design job at ABC Television in New York. He was fascinated by the technical and social possibilities of television and how design could participate. He soon had the chance to manifest his interest.

In 1960, the presidential debates were to be televised, for the first time, with ABC, CBS, and NBC collaborating on four broadcasts. ABC hosted the third debate, but due to a scheduling conflict, it would be staged remotely with Senator John F. Kennedy in an ABC studio in New York and Vice President Richard M. Nixon on a set in Los Angeles. This was a live broadcast where—using the electronic medium of television and cross-country data links—the two candidates would appear to be in the same room. The set design was central to pulling off this illusion. Corrin was tasked with creating two identical sets which would also look convincing as a split-screen image.

Zapotec & Pulsars

Monte Albán is a pre-Columbian site above Oaxaca, in central Mexico which I visited in 2015 with my parents-in-law, who had been there several times before. I was struck by the overlap of past and the present at the site, where an ancient Zapotec city and its foundations overlook the modern city of Oaxaca.

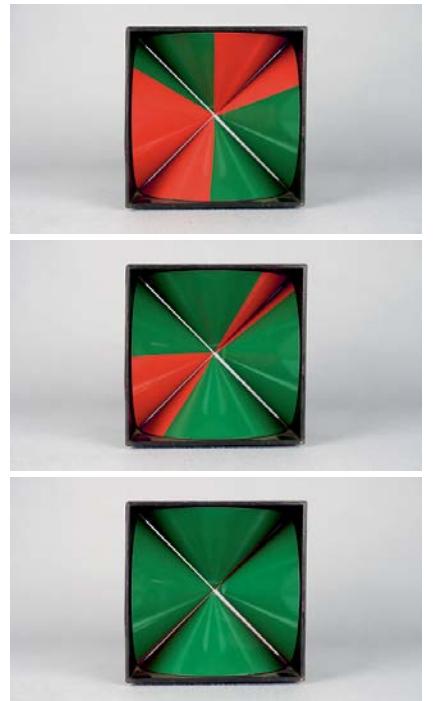
One afternoon, my father-in-law led us up the back way toward Monte Albán. As you crest a small hill, this [↓] is what you see—just an expanse. The scale is a bit hard to take in at first. It's gigantic.



It has a regular orthogonal layout of pyramid structures, inset with ceremonial grounds entered by the steps on the right. It was a ritual site, a sacred site, where (almost) nobody lived. Zapotec culture was particularly active in the central valleys of southern Mexico from about 700 B.C. to 700 A.D., and while it was not as large or long as some other native Mexican cultures, its language has persisted and is still spoken. The primitive forms and its distinct ceremonial layout makes it easy to cast yourself back in time. Monte Albán was a site for events that marked specific moments in time. It's kind of a walk-in clock.

We spent the day climbing up and down the various pyramids, examining the place. There was a ball court, where a ritual game was played. There were locations for sacrifices, for celebrations, births, funerals, and so on.

Here's a very rough first version [↓].



I quickly realized that I needed more photos to make the full sequence. And so I returned to Rome to work out from the software model where the edge of the red and green should be at any one moment.

All the buildings are rectangular except for this [↓] structure at the center. It's also the only building that is meant to be entered. It was the astronomical observatory and used only by Zapotec astronomers (who were also, in a reason-meets-faith synchrony, Zapotec priests). Members of this sect would enter, look up, read the stars or the sun in the sky, and then emerge to announce what time it was. Time-keeping was a divine act for Zapotecs, received by astronomer-priests directly from the heavens.



The site is also heavily populated with writing that marks ceremonial sites and events, recording dates from 700 B.C. using the oldest known example of a Mesoamerican calendar. Inscribed in stone, either directly on buildings or on free-standing upright slabs (stela), the writing system is thought to combine logographic, ideographic, pictographic, even alphabetic glyphs. This is not unique, but the combination of all of these systems in one culture is rare.

LOGOGRAPHIC: A writing system where glyphs stand for words or meaningful components of words (morphemes) in a language. No writing system can be entirely

logographic, but must include some phonetic element, either as part the logogram or as its own glyph.

IDEOGRAPHIC: A writing system where glyphs stand for ideas or concepts, not specific words in a language. In this system, there is no one-to-one link between symbol and language,

therefore there is also no single way to read these glyphs. No writing system can be entirely ideographic and maintain the full expressive capacity of a language.

makes sense currently in relation to these ideas which are themselves quite old. And it occurred to me that now, 50 years later, we've moved on from industrial production of objects to the post-industrial production of information: from cubic ashtrays to bespoke emojis. And it made me consider that the Tetraconic was in many ways already a post-industrial product. Or perhaps both industrial and post-industrial at once. It was a manufactured object of steel and aluminum, but its purpose was to produce a constantly changing image. Its rhetorical design was in its script: how the cones turn, the sequence, the phasing, its temporal dimension. Munari called it both a product for exploring programming and an object for understanding forms in the process of becoming. Both of these lessons seem equally, or maybe more, important now than they did in 1965.

Touch Start to Begin

This is a case study of an interface designed over 20 years ago and still in use today, fundamentally unchanged. This is a project I worked on, so it will have some personal detail.

We begin in 1995. I had just started working at IDEO San Francisco for Bill Moggridge. Here he is speaking at the White House [↓].



IDEO was a product design firm, but around that time they'd moved into the new practice of interaction design. I'd worked for a couple years in New York, and had heard about what was going on at IDEO. It sounded exciting and I managed to get a job there as an interaction designer. I moved to California.

Twelve years before in 1983, Moggridge designed this laptop computer, the Grid Compass [↓]. Laptops were novel and, as I understand it, when Moggridge began to work with the machine he soon realized that the bulk of his attention was focused on the screen. The physical design of the product was good, but the interface was where the action was. This epiphany at least in part led to developing interaction design at IDEO. By 1995, when I arrived, the discipline was established, if fairly new.

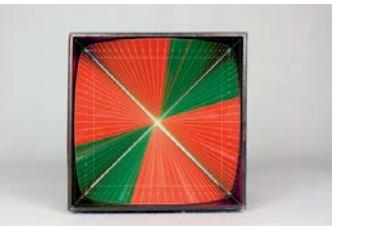


This is a New York City subway token [↓], also from 1995. The token came from a clerk in a subway station booth [↓]. You walked up to the booth, stuffed your dollar under the window, and said, "One." A token was returned and that token then put into a slot in a turnstile, which let you enter the subway. It was fast, could be a bit gruff, but it was quite efficient.

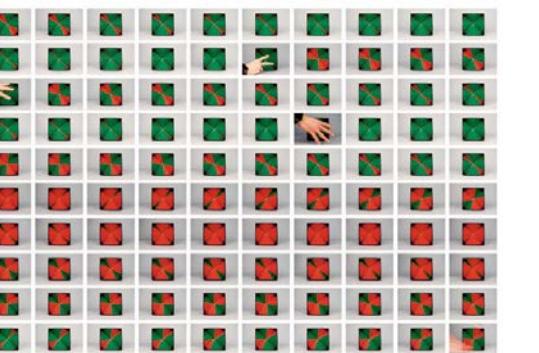


At the time, the MTA (Metropolitan Transit Authority) was moving away from tokens and would soon introduce the MetroCard, a magnetic swipe stored value system, for fare payment. The MetroCard uses card readers

I then used that information to produce a kind of temporal diagram [↓].



The diagram could then be overlaid on my live camera feed to tell where to put the edge of the red and green, and when. When I returned to Milan, I spent the day lining up the cones to match my diagram, using the image on the screen as a larger viewfinder and moving each cone a tiny bit at a time with my finger to get it in the right place. It was nearly impossible. In that shoot, I made a comprehensive series of photographs which you see here on a contact sheet [↓]. I then produced five takes of the entire sequence, which I assembled later with video software.



I quickly realized that I needed more photos to make the full sequence. And so I returned to Rome to work out from the software model where the edge of the red and green should be at any one moment.

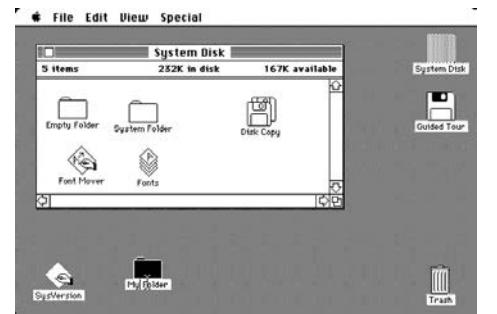
a meager 512 × 342 pixels and only black and white. Starting from the existing Apple Lisa interface, Kare developed a graphic language based in bitmaps, some as small as 16 × 16 pixel grids of black and white, to articulate the various aspects of the new computer's [↓] interface.



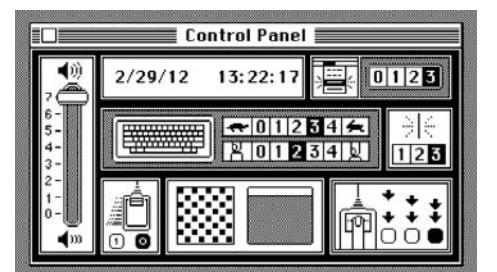
Driven also by Steve Jobs' interest, Apple made a central commitment to good typography in its system software and interfaces. (In his 2005 Stanford University commencement speech, Jobs attributes his interest in typography to wandering into a calligraphy class at Reed College. He then encourages the Stanford students to likewise follow their curiosity wherever it leads.) As a result, a small set fonts were built directly into the Macintosh operating system, many of which were designed by Kare. Most consequentially she designed Chicago, the default system font used in all of Macintosh's interfaces. This type was designed to address the rigors of a one color, low-resolution bitmapped display, and to be immediately legible and clear in the context of a novel graphic interface. Here's Chicago [↓], a good bit enlarged.

The quick brown fox jumps over a lazy dog.

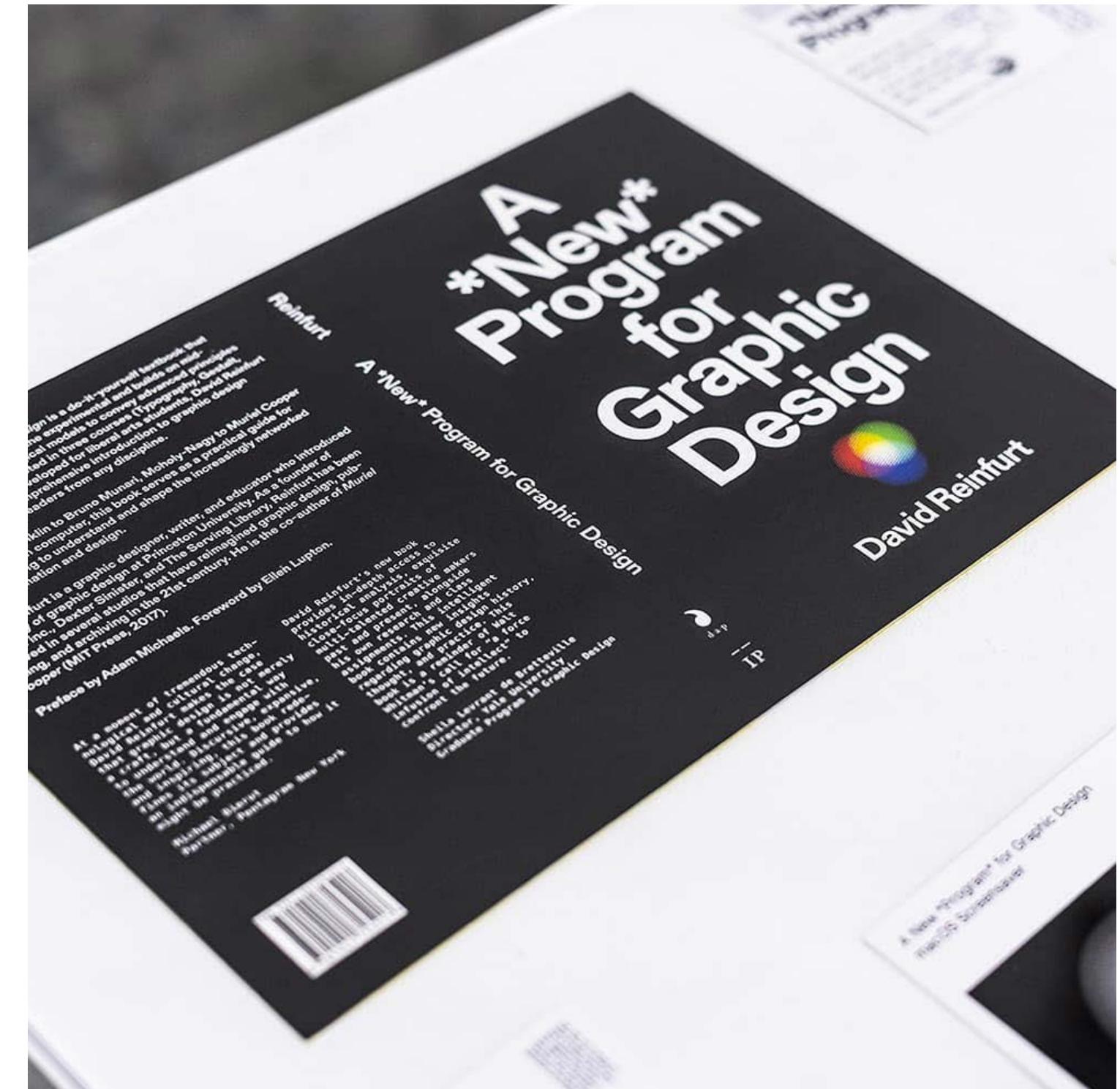
And here it is again [↓], in the context of the interface.



On the top left of the screen, anchored by an apple, the nested pull-down menus performed system-wide actions. Here is the Macintosh control panel [↓], a tour de force of early interface design.

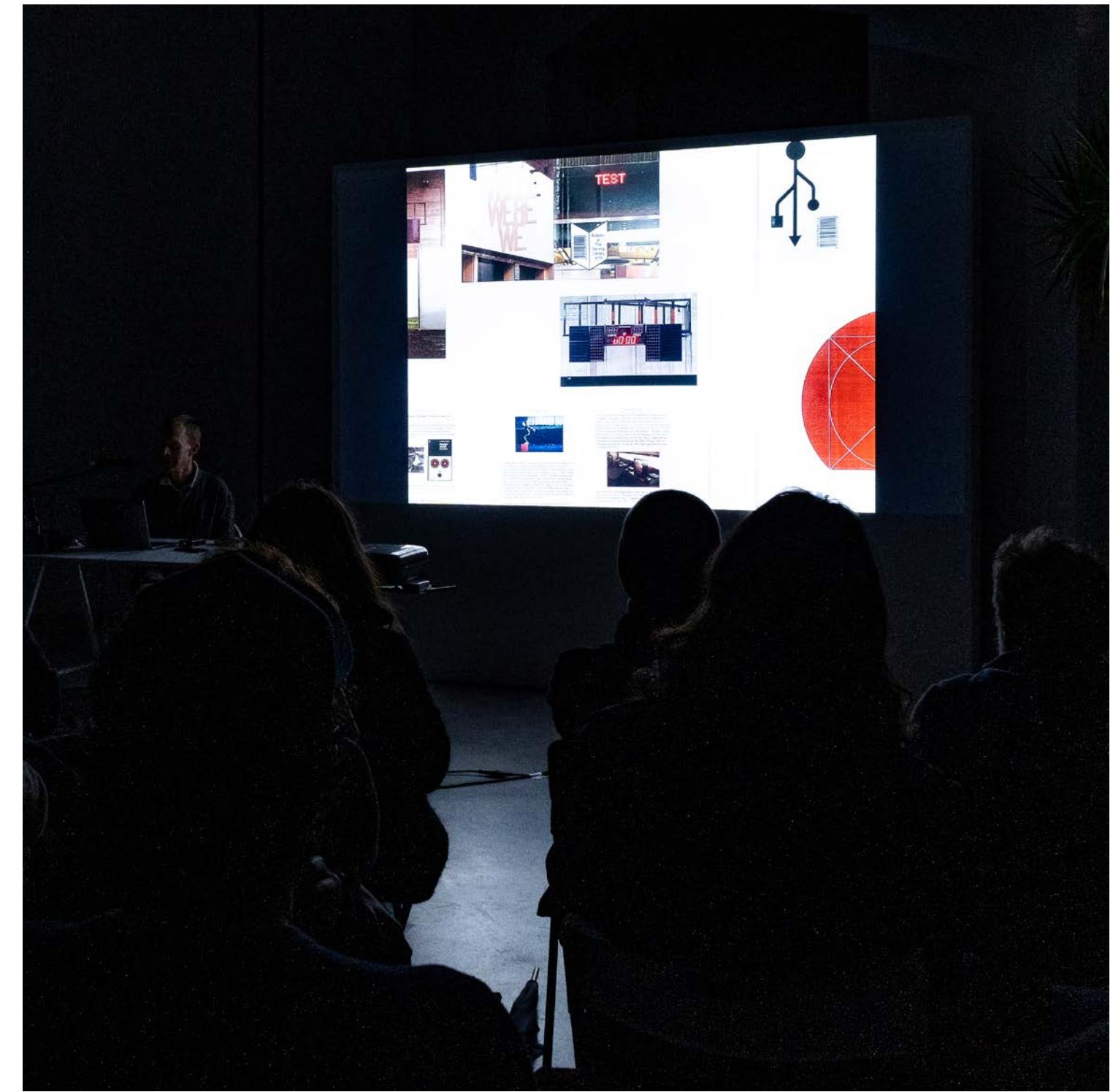


On this condensed graphic, the user adjusts what is adjustable in the behavior of the interface. So, for example volume is on the left [↓]. At the bottom right is the control for double click speed [↓], which was important at the time because double clicks were an entirely new behavior and





A *New* Program for Graphic Design exhibition, Milan (2019)



11. A *New* Program for Graphic Design



A *New* Program for Graphic Design exhibition, Milan (2019)





A *New* Program for Graphic Design exhibition, billboard commission with the original Los Angeles (2018) lecture setting
for Spazio Maiocchi, Milan (2019)

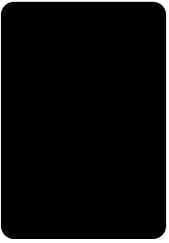
New York Consolidated is a non-profit organization and publisher that seeks to foster an equitable culture in and through the arts founded in 2017 by Jane Hait. Born out of frustration with access to and representation in contemporary art and fired in the crucible of a global pandemic and the Black Lives Matter social justice movement, the new institution opens November 2021 in downtown New York City. The building will be a site for art and advocacy, hosting exhibitions, events, and providing open access to a resource library and public programs.

I started as a member of the advisory board in 2017 developing the naming and bookstore concept. I then moved onto designing the preview website and eventually the complete graphic identity, messaging, building signage, and digital strategy. I worked together with 6a Architects (London), Paratus Group Project Management (New York), and Lichen Interior Design (New York). The custom typeface was designed by Mark Owens and Nilas Andersen with artist Shannon Ebner.

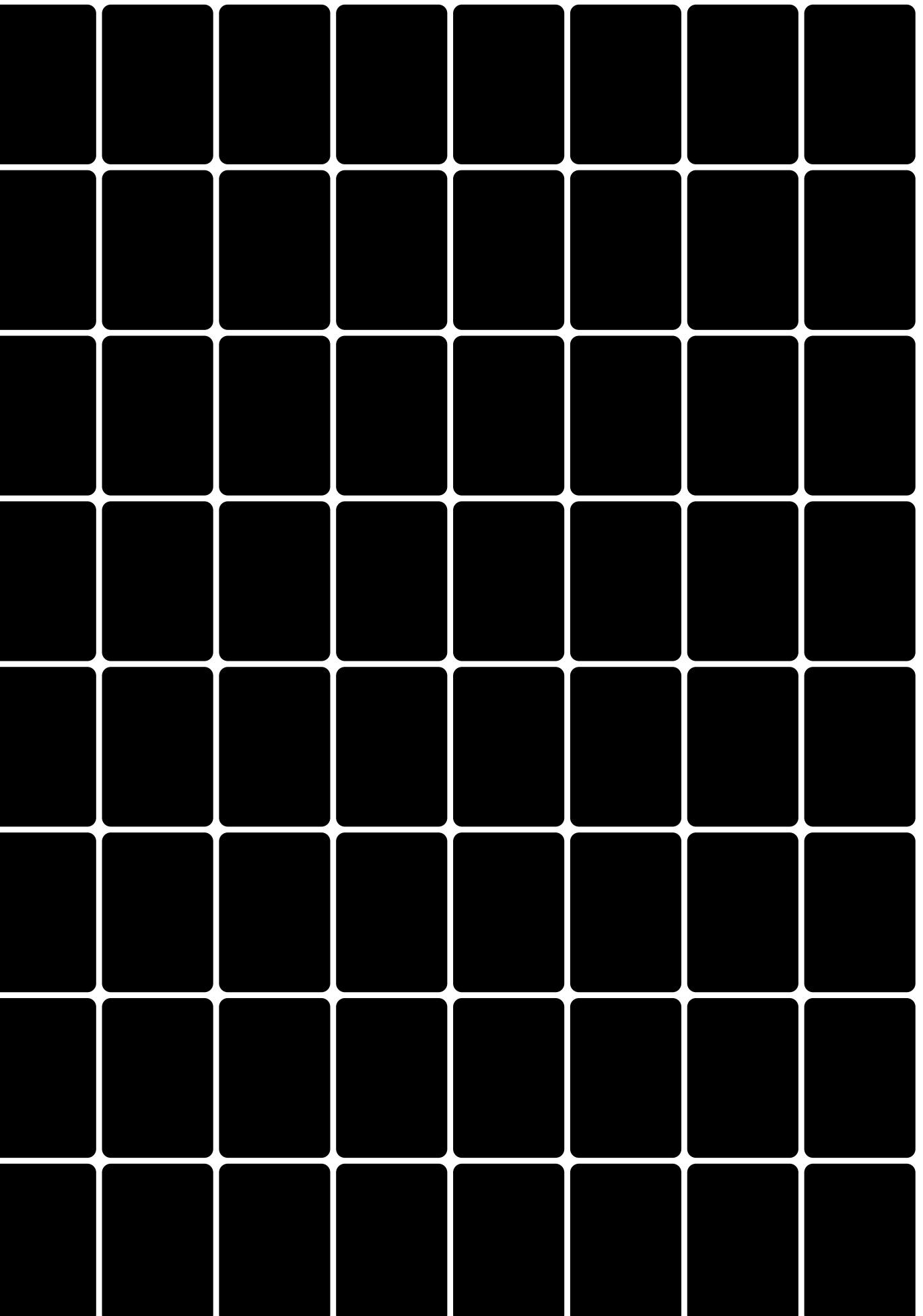
Housed in the former New York Consolidated Playing Card Company factory in Manhattan's Greenwich Village, the project is founded on the premise that working together is the best route to consequential, lasting change. The graphic identity is derived from a concerted study of vernacular street typography in New York City, and presents a simple, reduced template. The website fills this basic template with live data streaming from the city itself, as the logo is replaced with the most recently arrived subway train, with Covid vaccination sites, with current updates to the New York City street tree census, and realtime reports from the 311 municipal service telephone line.

<http://www.n-y-c.org/>

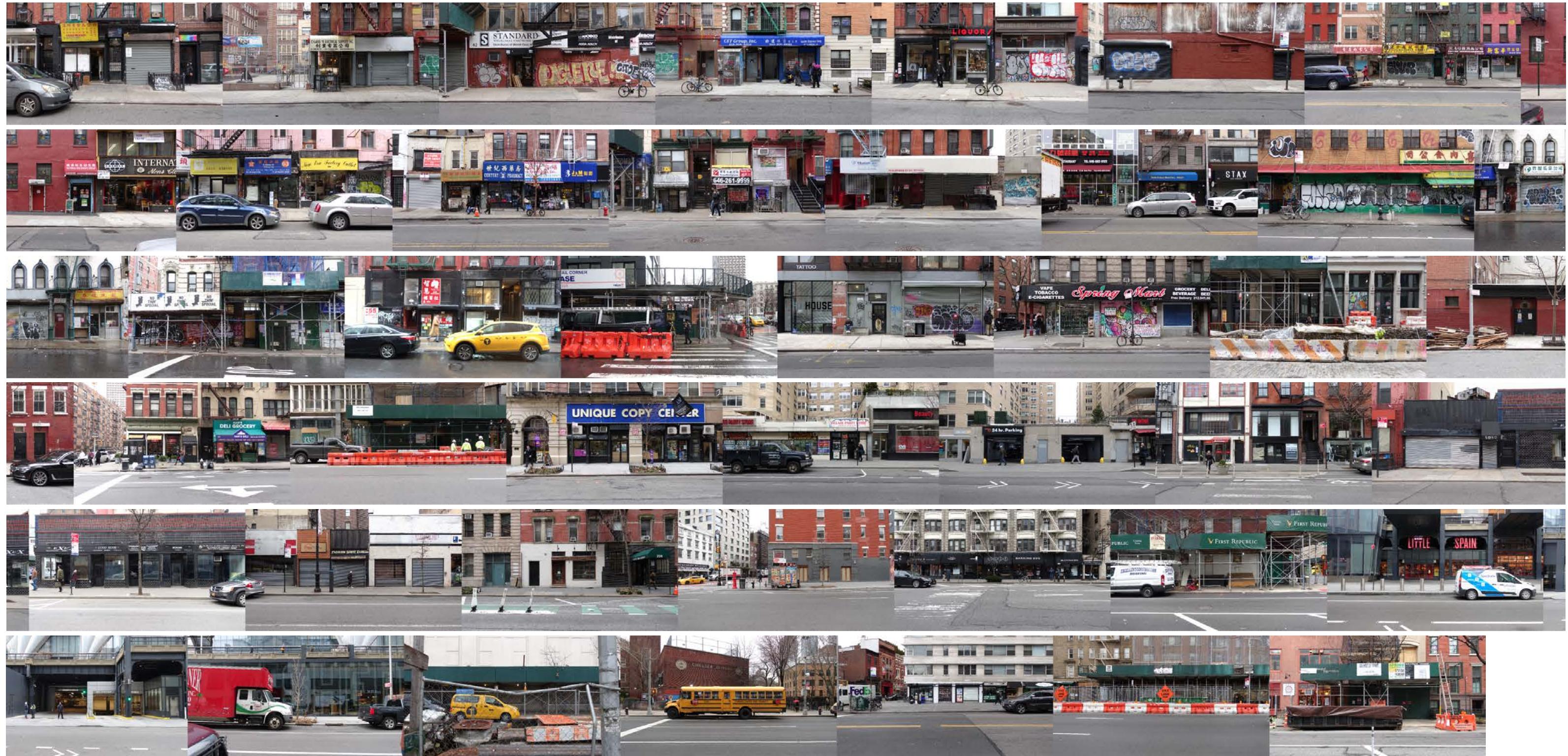
NEW YORK CONSOLIDATED



The graphic identity for New York Consolidated (NYC) is based around a custom, monospaced typeface derived from vernacular typography in the city. This basic form is augmented with "the block," a generic mark as a rounded rectangle whose specific proportions reflect current digital devices and connect to the playing cards made at the site by the institution's namesake. (2020)



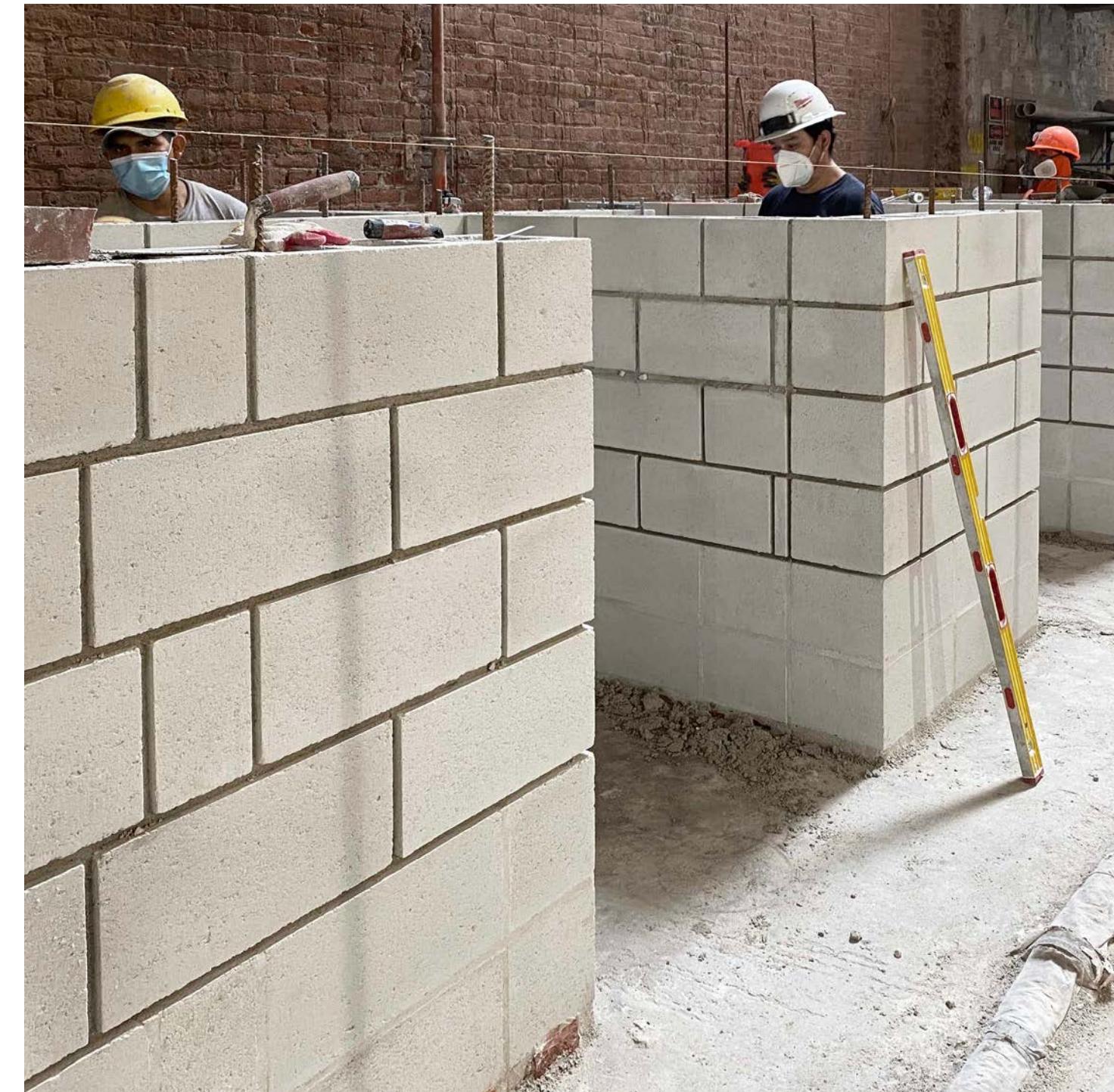
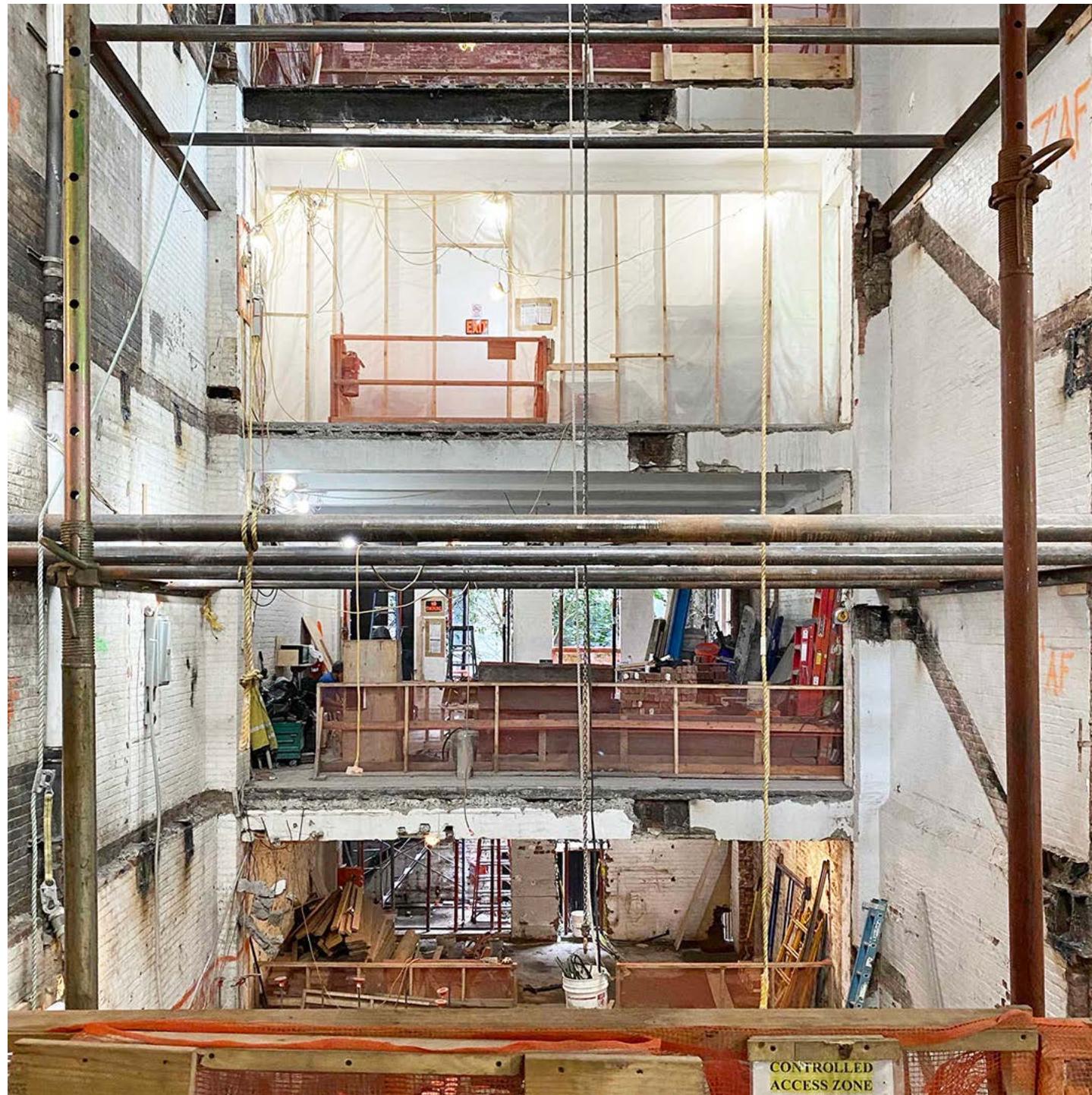
New York Consolidated calls itself an “organization-in-formation.” It responds to the needs of artists and their publics and builds programs around these needs. NYC will work towards equity, using art and publishing to amplify diverse stories past and present to reflect how art and artists help create a vibrant, just society. NYC block mark assembled as pattern (2020)



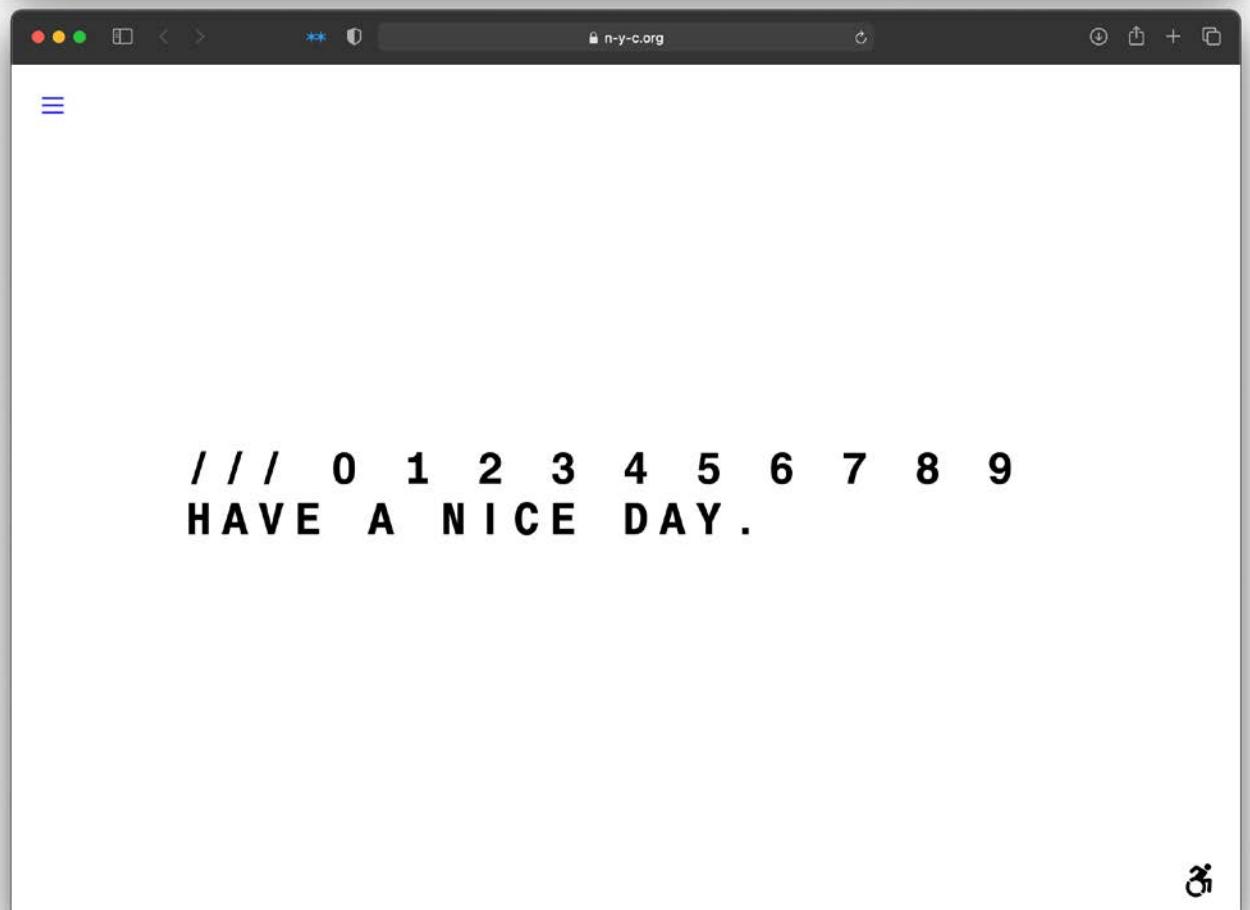
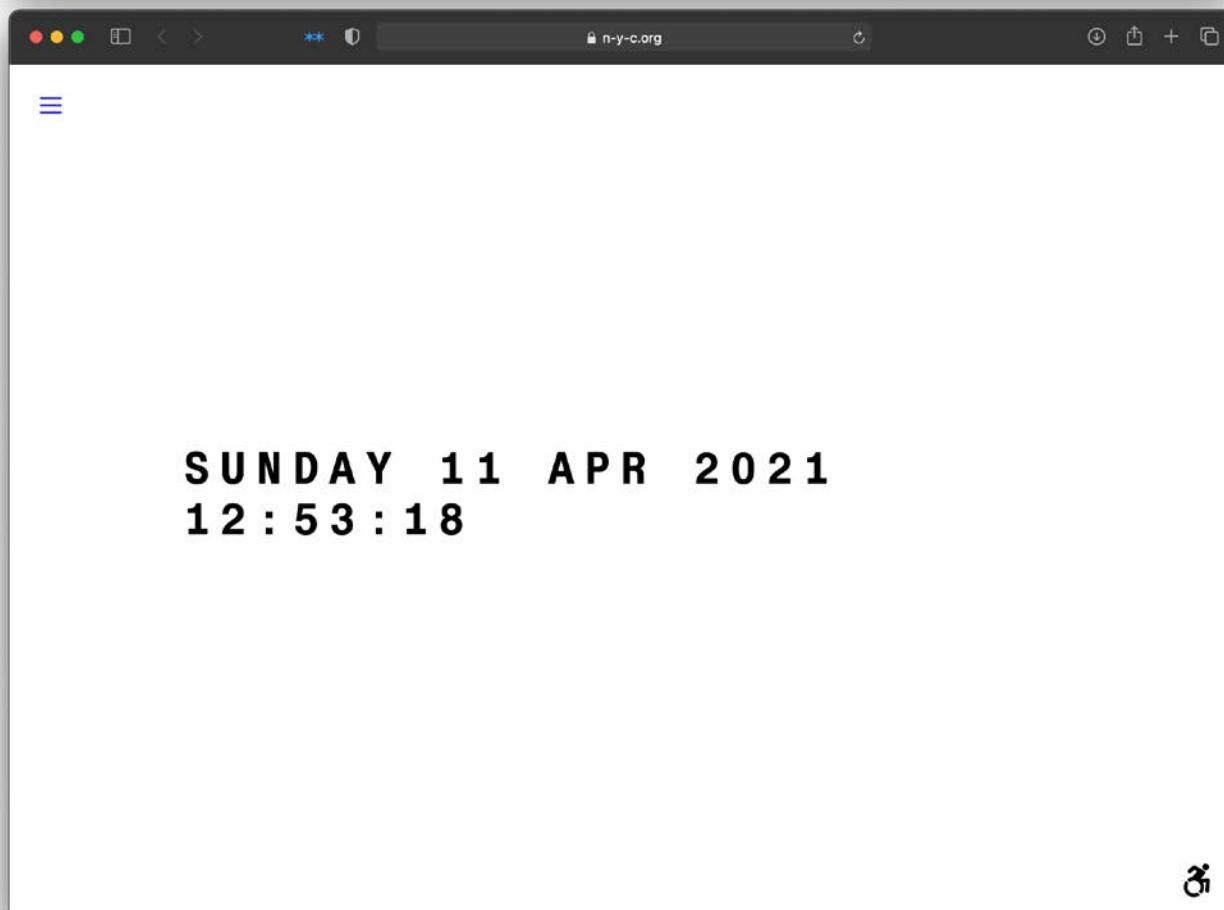
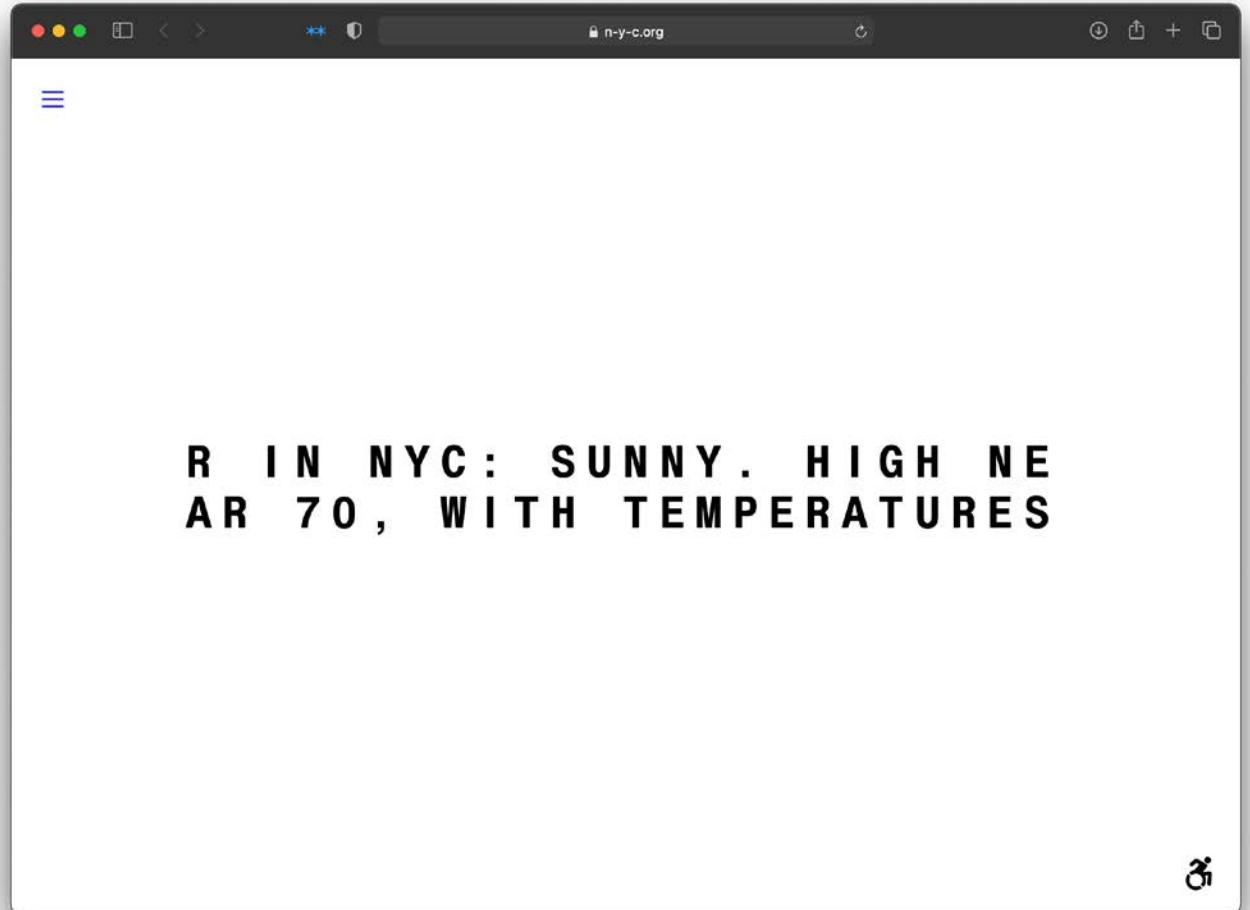
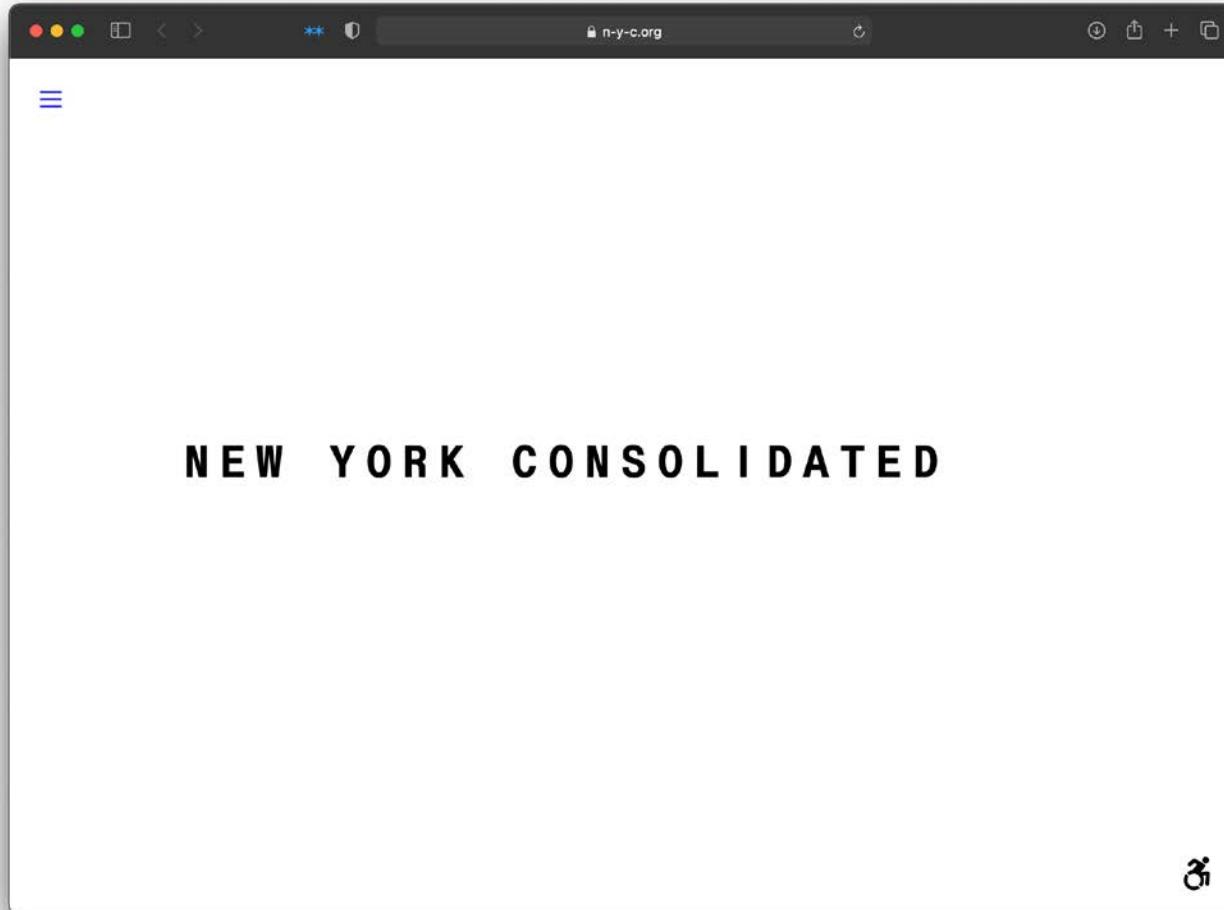
New York City is also always “in-formation.” Building and re-building, put together piecemeal, block by city block, to form a (temporarily) coherent whole. These photographs comprise a walk from my studio at 38 Ludlow Street on the Lower East Side to the future home of New York Consolidated at 225 West 13th Street on March 6, 2020, days before pandemic lockdown in the city.
43 discrete photographs collapsed into one continuous streetscape (2020)



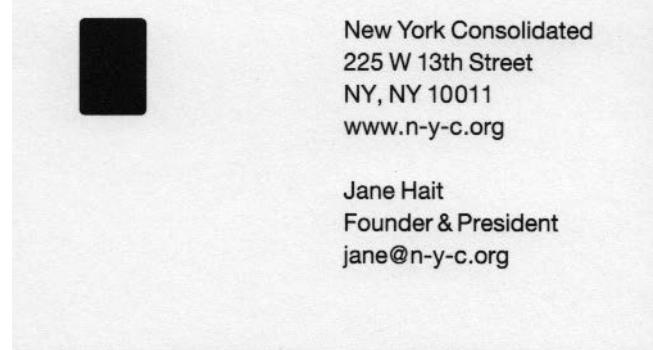
One year later on March 5, 2021, I repeated this walk from my studio to New York Consolidated. The images reveal a radically changed streetscape, articulated by vacancy and covered in vibrant new writing. The city is always changing, constantly reconsidering itself.
43 discrete photographs collapsed into one continuous streetscape (2021)



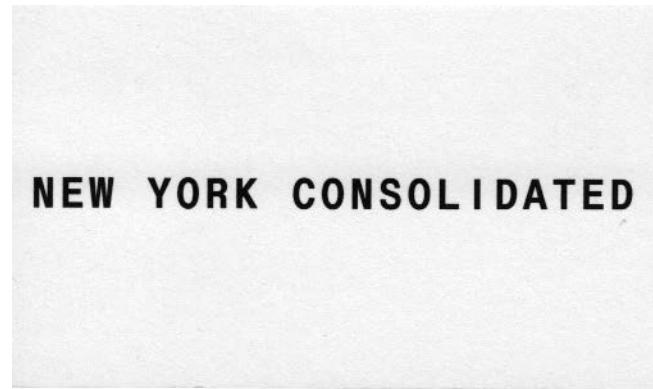
New York City is always changing. Why shouldn't an art institution work the same way? These are two images from a one-year Instagram project which streams curated construction photos of New York Consolidated at 225 W 13th Street. Over the course of the year, the building slowly takes shape in the archived feed. (2021)



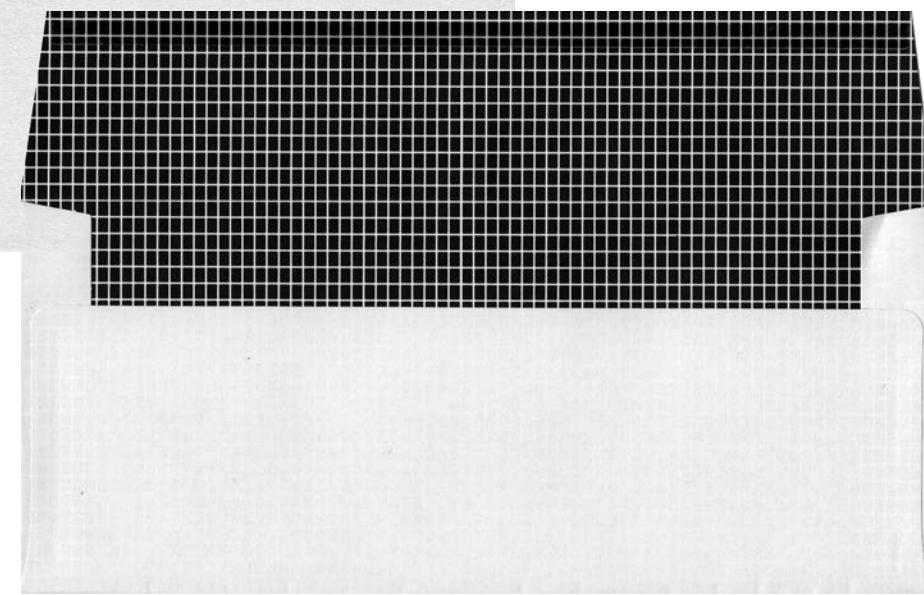
NEW YORK CONSOLIDATED



New York Consolidated
225 W 13th Street
NY, NY 10011



New York Consolidated
is a new nonprofit
organization & publisher
that seeks to foster an
equitable culture in and
through the arts.



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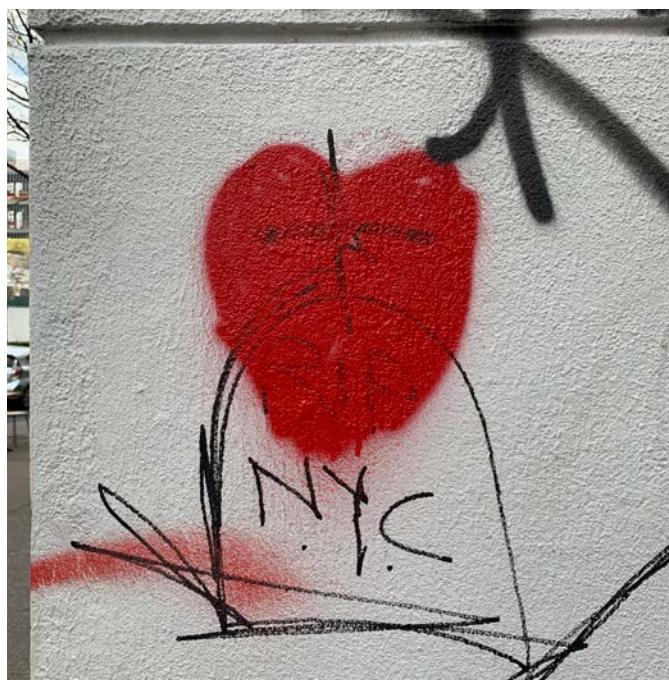
NEW YORK CONSOLIDATED

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NY, NY 10011

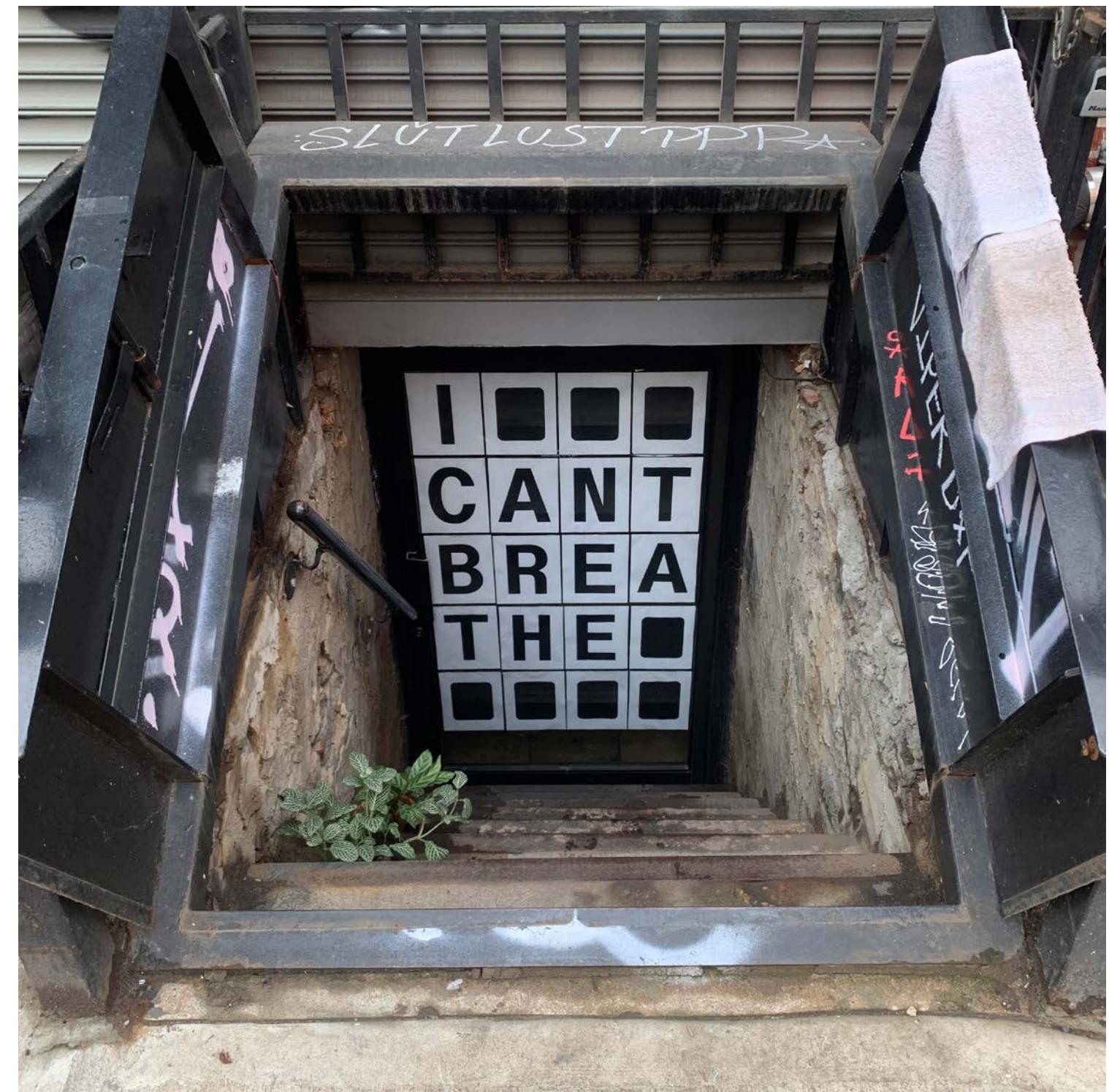
The graphic identity is austere. Its application is designed to start simply and become more fluid, evolving over time with use and according to the immediate need. (2020)



Six months into the pandemic, the streets of New York City were forlorn and desolate. As individuals and institutions reconsidered the city, New York Consolidated doubled down on its commitment. This identity graphic designed for an email newsletter and adapted for totebags, updates Milton Glaser's foundational expression of love for the city. (2021)



Following a moment of reckoning prompted by the murder of George Floyd, a simple, changing modular sign was installed on the glass door of my storefront basement studio in lower Manhattan. The text changed with the tenor of the city, working more like a mirror than a sign. The messages were clearly urgent, but they were also found. This is not my language, but then again these are also not my letters. It's as if the type has assembled itself automatically, in a grid and facing the street, to repeat the collective voice of New York City, as it stood, speaking in concert, consolidated in one voice at that moment. 38 Ludlow Street, New York City (2020)





38 Ludlow Street, New York City (2020)





Storefront facade of the future home of New York Consolidated, 225 West 13th Street, New York City (2021)



On the storefront facade of the future home of New York Consolidated, the mission statement is painted immediately next to the front door handle. The sign is designed to be updated and repainted regularly as the organization evolves. This first mission statement formed as a question is concise, pragmatic, and fundamentally open: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? (2021)

David Reinfurt is an independent graphic designer in New York City. He graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1993 and received an MFA from Yale University in 1999. David worked at Two Twelve Associates from 1993–1995 and as an interaction designer with IDEO San Francisco from 1995–1997. On the first business day of 2000, David formed O-R-G inc., a flexible graphic design practice composed of a constantly shifting network of collaborators. Together with graphic designer Stuart Bertolotti-Bailey, David established Dexter Sinister in 2006 as a workshop in the basement at 38 Ludlow Street on the Lower East Side in New York City. Dexter Sinister published the semi-annual arts magazine Dot Dot Dot from 2006–2011. Together with Stuart Bertolotti-Bailey and Angie Keefer, David set up a non-profit institution called The Serving Library in 2011 which maintains a physical collection of art and design works, stages events, and publishes a semi-annual journal. David currently teaches at Princeton University. He was 2010 United States Artists Rockefeller Fellow in Architecture and Design, has exhibited widely and his work is included in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art, Walker Art Center, Centres Georges Pompidou, and the Whitney Museum of American Art. David was 2016–2017 Mark Hampton Rome Prize Fellow in Design at the American Academy in Rome. He has written two books, Muriel Cooper (MIT Press, 2017) and A *New* Program For Graphic Design (Inventory Press/DAP, 2019).

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