

U5588109

DATA

DESIGN

MANIFESTO  
ADVOCATING FOR  
*FREEDOM*  
AND  
*EQUALITY*

WORD COUNT - 1180

LIBERATION



This manifesto sets out my approach to data design. It has been guided by my personal experience of data visualisation and draws inspiration from people who have influenced me. It follows the theme of freedom – with the purpose of achieving liberation through thoughtful design practices, not just for oneself, but also for others.

Many individuals and groups in the field of data visualisation have campaigned for liberation, each in their own way, and their principles and teachings are reflected here.

The seven points of this manifesto are set out in chronological order. Each point is inspired by a specific piece of work that ignited my passion for data visualisation, invoked a feeling of freedom within me, and made me realise what I could achieve.

Liberation comes in many forms and fulfils many purposes. My desire is that ‘data design liberation’ should advocate for minorities, create agency for all in society, fight for equality, encourage expression of self, and

# EXPLORE WITH CURIOSITY. UNDERSTAND WITH RATIONALITY: COMMUNICATE WITH CONVICTION.

The world is complex. While the numbers that we use to understand this complexity have the potential to aid understanding, often they lead to misunderstanding. Thus, when it comes to data visualisation, I believe it is important to take time and fully understand what we are trying to achieve. This requires having an inquisitive and almost child-like approach to investigation and having an open mind to the possibility that our preconceptions could be wrong or that our experiences are different.

A rational approach frees us from bias or manipulation, and it is our responsibility to create work that conveys this attitude –to present practical solutions through work that is honest and transparent.

This enables us to be true to our convictions; to be passionate about what motivates us and to spread enthusiasm and knowledge in accessible and exciting ways. Then we can leave, not only the world of data and statistics in a better and more informed condition, but also the world as a whole.

INSPIRED BY:  
HANS ROSLING,  
'FACTFULLNESS' & 'GAPMINDER'

INSPIRED BY:

DAVID McCANDLES,  
'INFORMATION IS BEAUTIFUL'

30



## DO NOT BE LIMITED BY TOPIC OR FORM.

My first encounter with data visualisations came in the form of fun and colourful depictions of dictator's wives, daily diets and death spirals. This drew me in, full of intrigue and curiosity, to a world that excited me and opened my eyes to a field I hadn't known to exist.

At a fundamental level, I see data visualisations as a fun and easily digestible way to display and communicate information. While there is a serious side to data visualisation, it doesn't always need to be constrained by deep meaning and purpose. As long as there is transparency, and the visualisations are not causing harm then we should be free to create whatever interests us in whatever way we wish. This is how I believe progress in the field is being made, and how conditions are being created for creativity to thrive.

Any type of visual that has the potential to gain interest from a vast range of society has huge value and importance. The opportunities of data design will become limitless and enjoyable if we are allowing people full expression without judgement or conceit.

# Priest sorry for smashing pumpkins

By Taz Ali

A parish priest in the Czech Republic has apologised after he smashed up pumpkins that were carved by children, saying he believed them to be a symbol of the devil.

The children were left bewildered after Father Jaromir Smejkal destroyed the carved pumpkins placed near his church in the village of Kuredov in the South Moravian region on two occasions.

Fr Smejkal, described as an "orcist" in local media, yesterday apologised for the vandalism in an open letter to the mayor. It was published on the village Facebook page, the *Breclavský Deník* newspaper reported.

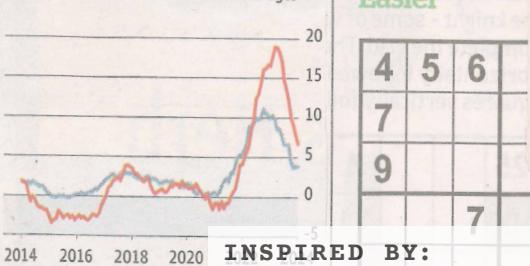
"I had no idea that there was an event with children called 'pumpkin picking,'" he said.

"I know the majority on

UK inflation holds at 4% as food prices fall

CPI 12-month inflation rate, %

● CPI ● CPI food and non-alcoholic beverages



## PEOPLE

### Man downs 2,000 pints in 200 days

A man has spent £8,000 on a challenge to drink 2,000 pints in 200 days.

For more than six months Jon May, 25, has drunk 10 pints every day in a pub crawl sparked after he saw someone on TikTok trying to drink 1,000 pints in a year.

He has consumed 360,000 calories from beer and cider.

Mr May, from Guildford in Surrey, said: "It does feel like a mildly impressive achievement... It's a very British thing to do."

## Nature's ray The solitary stingray who got pregnant

### Sudoku

Easier

4	5	6
7		
9		

## The most secure form of data preservation is stone, then parchment, then paper. But the most unstable is digital

be.  
n Mayor Sadiq  
this was

source for  
but said  
t for London  
regimes to  
assets on a  
asis".

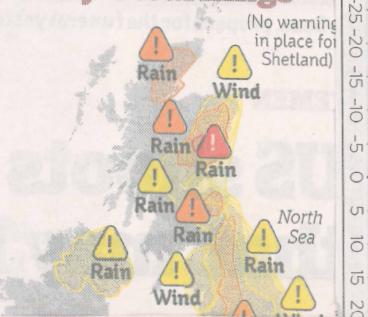
in, data from  
rol firm Anticimex  
that reports of bedbugs

## EMPLOYMENT

### Over 1,400 CEOs quit positions in U

More than 1,400 US chief executives have left their positions so far this year to September, according to a report by executive coaching firm Challenger, Gray & Christmas. That's up nearly 50 per cent on the same period last year and the highest on record over that period since 2002. It said post-pandemic exhaustion may now be catching up with executives.

### Today's warnings



## Class barriers to elite universities and jobs

Gaby Hincliff asks if we are sliding back to the days when middle-class children mostly went to university and then into elite careers. Even working-class students (The campus wants to talk about, 6 Feb) want to talk about social mobility. Even when they're not, it's still there. Despite successive waves of social mobility, the report feelings of social isolation and class-based microaggressions by their peers and staff.

Working-class students comprise around 20% of undergraduates at the 24 Russell Group universities and on even lower percentages

of postgraduates, with those

entitled to free school

education

and then into elite careers.

(The campus

wants to talk about, 6 Feb)

We're not sliding back to those days

- we never left them behind.

Successive reports have revealed

that between 20% and 65%

professionals in occupations as

# INVESTIGATE THE NUMBERS AND SEEK TRUTHS.

We are constantly surrounded by a whirlpool of information and numbers. In the media, online, through word-of-mouth, and without context and background, they are often meaningless. So much so, it's hard to know what is truthful; what is an accurate representation and what is not.

The responsibility therefore falls upon us to build up our data literacy. Whether collecting data for a visualisation or viewing other people's work, it is important to develop a questioning mind that can identify the gaps and deceptions.

Through educating ourselves we can look out for signs of misleading information and seek the context behind the numbers. This will allow us to create and promote work that is honest and well-informed, and help to increase a more transparent and honest culture surrounding statistics.



FTSE 100  
+56.12

7568.40

All Share  
+28.06

4132.87

Dow Indi  
+24.20

38296.95

Nikkei 225  
-260.65

37703.32

£/€  
1.1705

-0.0053

£/\$  
1.2550

-0.0052



# BE UNDETERRED IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY.

Fight for your voice to be heard through your work – as many pioneers have done throughout history. Fight against what society may tell you and take up your rightful place. Let your work do the talking. Take liberty in what you create and push against restraints that are placed on you.

If you are in a position of power, then make space for others and listen to the voices of the marginalised. Create visualisations that amplify your position or advocate for those unable to express their own.

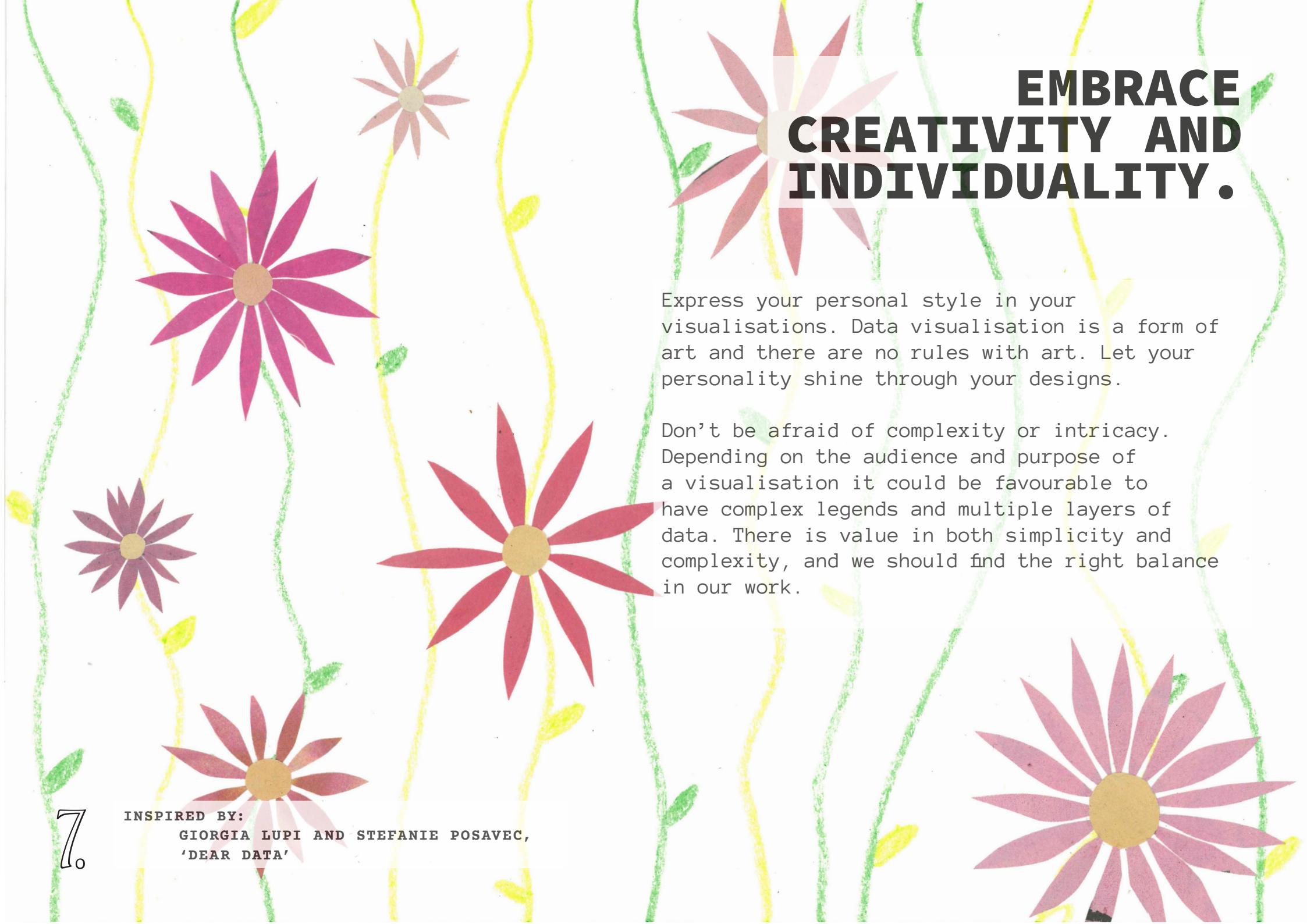
INSPIRED BY:  
FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE,  
'DIAGRAM OF THE CAUSES OF MORTALITY'

# TAKE A PROACTIVE APPROACH TO DATA.

Data is inarguably powerful, both in small ways and in big ways. We are surrounded by data in our day-to-day lives. Don't shy away – let us not be afraid, let us harness the power and let us learn how to take control.

We can use data visualisations to communicate what we are passionate about, and through this we have the amazing opportunity to take charge of new thoughts and ideas, to help humans and the environment, and to educate and learn.

INSPIRED BY:  
JER THORP,  
'LIVING IN DATA'

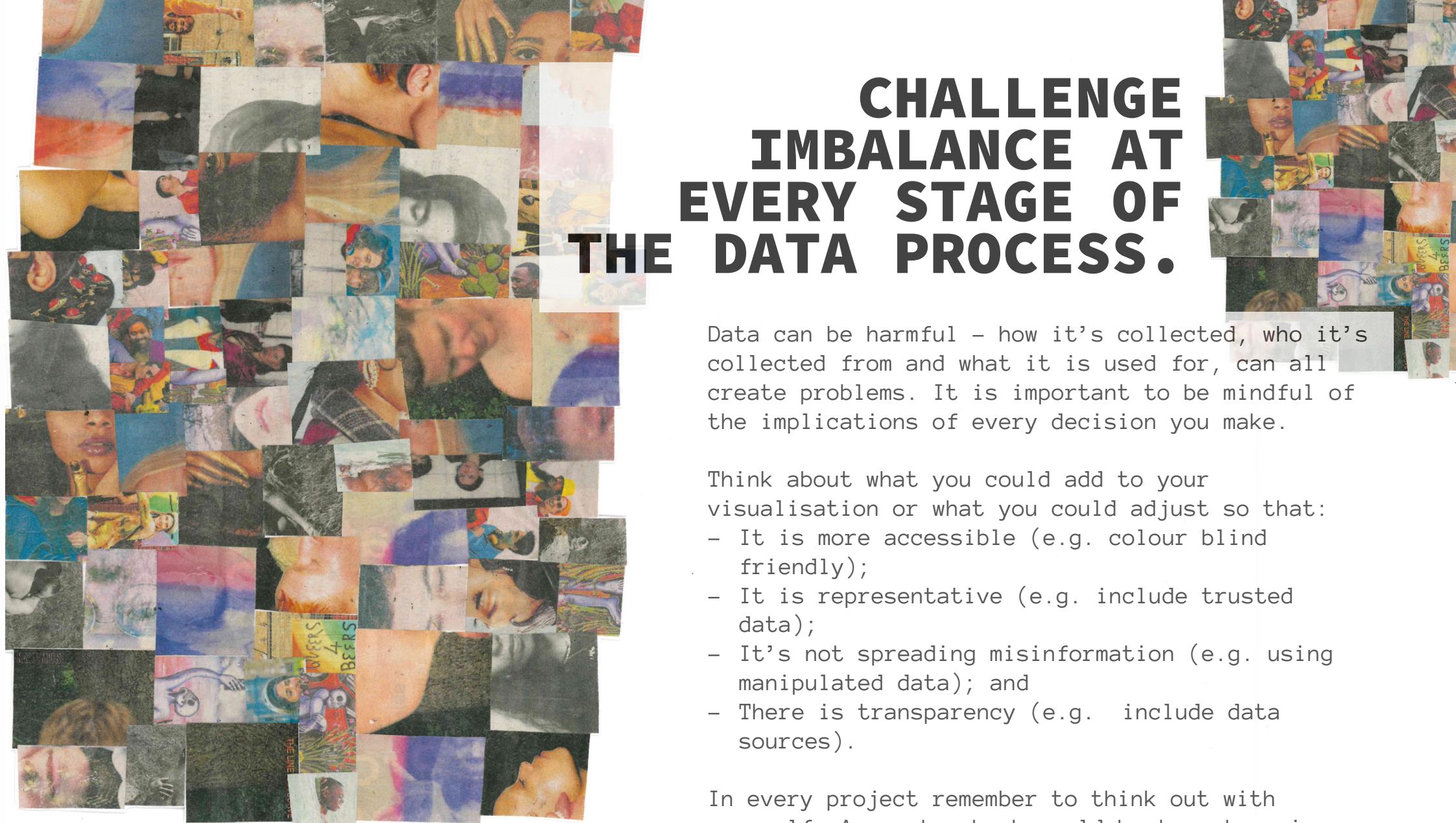


# EMBRACE CREATIVITY AND INDIVIDUALITY.

Express your personal style in your visualisations. Data visualisation is a form of art and there are no rules with art. Let your personality shine through your designs.

Don't be afraid of complexity or intricacy. Depending on the audience and purpose of a visualisation it could be favourable to have complex legends and multiple layers of data. There is value in both simplicity and complexity, and we should find the right balance in our work.

INSPIRED BY:  
GIORGIA LUPI AND STEFANIE POSAVEC,  
'DEAR DATA'



# CHALLENGE IMBALANCE AT EVERY STAGE OF THE DATA PROCESS.

Data can be harmful – how it's collected, who it's collected from and what it is used for, can all create problems. It is important to be mindful of the implications of every decision you make.

Think about what you could add to your visualisation or what you could adjust so that:

- It is more accessible (e.g. colour blind friendly);
- It is representative (e.g. include trusted data);
- It's not spreading misinformation (e.g. using manipulated data); and
- There is transparency (e.g. include data sources).

In every project remember to think out with yourself. A way to check would be to get a mix of people to check the visualisation, especially people that the data is about. This is an important measure to ensure that each stage of the process is thoughtful and well balanced.



INSPIRED BY:  
CATHERINE D'IGNAZIO AND LAUREN F KLEIN,  
'DATA FEMINISM'



In a world where oppression exists in abundance, data can be used to liberate. What we intend to do with data is important and has to be meaningful. Who we choose to help and what we choose to challenge is completely up to us. By visualising data, we are equipping ourselves with a powerful tool; the ability to give a voice to the voiceless, to expose injustice, and to uncover truths.

The statements of this manifesto act as a theoretical framework for the creation of data visualisations with the ultimate goal of making the world a better place for all.

## THE END.

All art work created by the author with material used from *The Skinny* magazine, *The Guardian* newspaper and *The i* newspaper.