Visual Storytelling I

Session One

MVIS 5101 March–May 2023

What are we doing today?

- Introductions (activity)
- Exploring elements of design
- Course overview & questions
- Description of this week's assignment
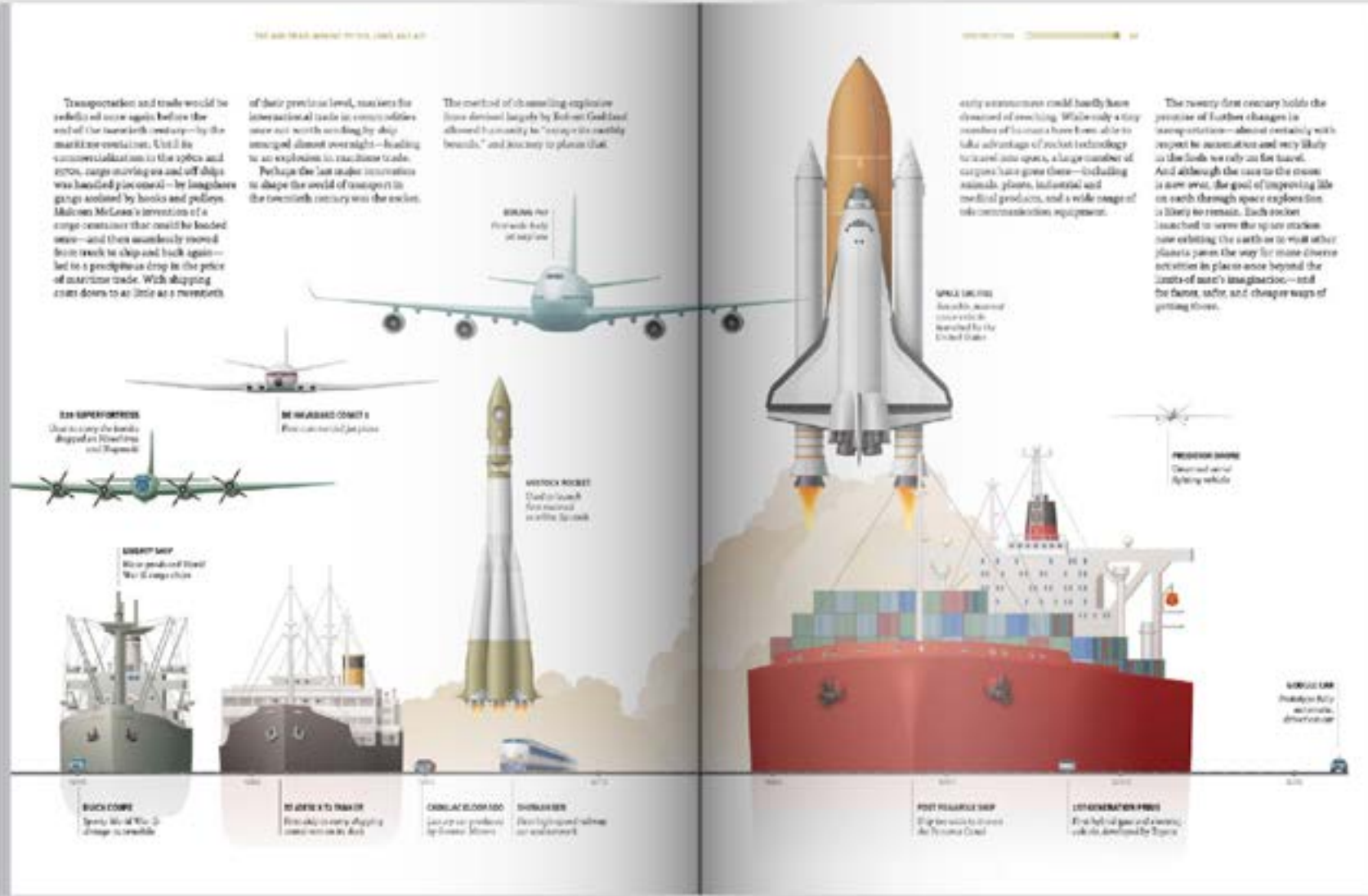- Illustrator demo (time permitting)

Introductions

Introductions

My background:

- Live in Brooklyn, NY

- 20+ years experience in design

- Past clients include The World Bank, MoMA, Penguin Press, The Guardian, United Nations Development Programme, etc.

Introductions

The Way to Go: Moving by Sea, Land, and Air

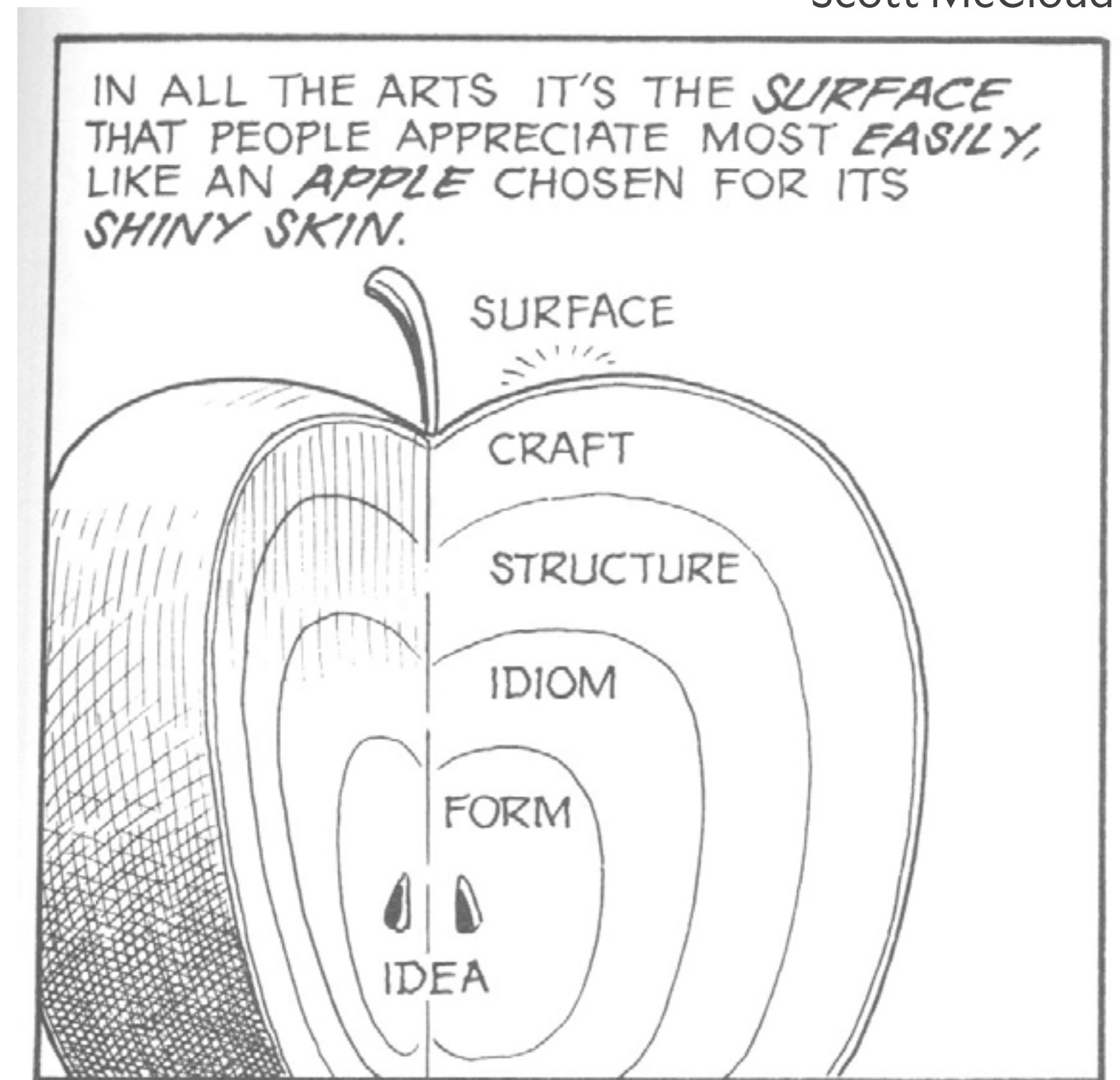The World Bank Strategic Impact Evaluation Fund

Introduction Activity

What are the ingredients of a story in film?
...in data visualization?

Elements of design

From Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics*

- **Surface**
- **Craft**
- **Structure**
- **Idiom**
- **Form**
- **Idea/Purpose**

IN ALL THE ARTS IT'S THE *SURFACE* THAT PEOPLE APPRECIATE MOST *EASILY*, LIKE AN *APPLE* CHOSEN FOR ITS *SHINY SKIN*.
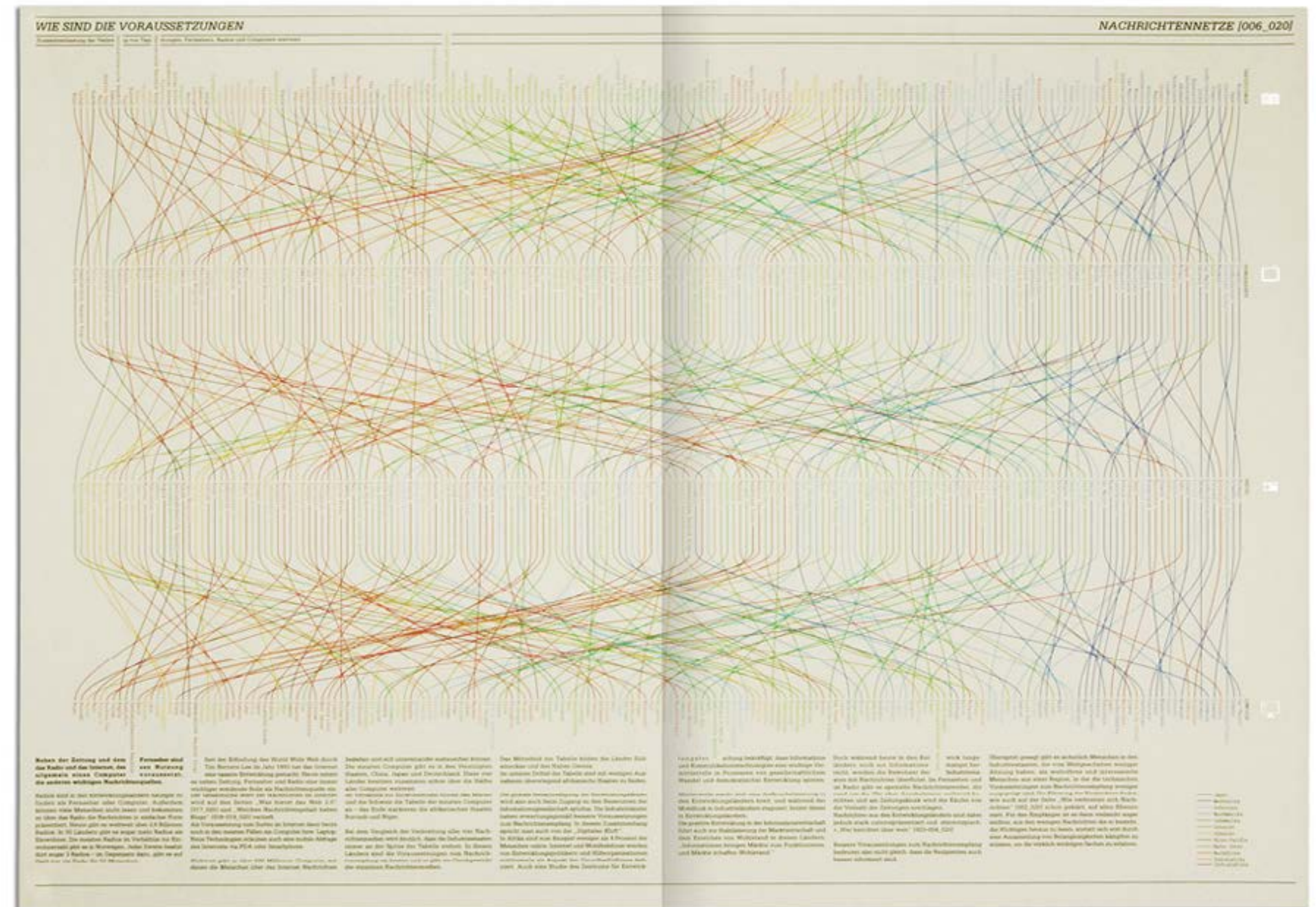
SURFACE
CRAFT
STRUCTURE
IDIOM
FORM
IDEA

Elements of design

Stephan Brautigam

Surface

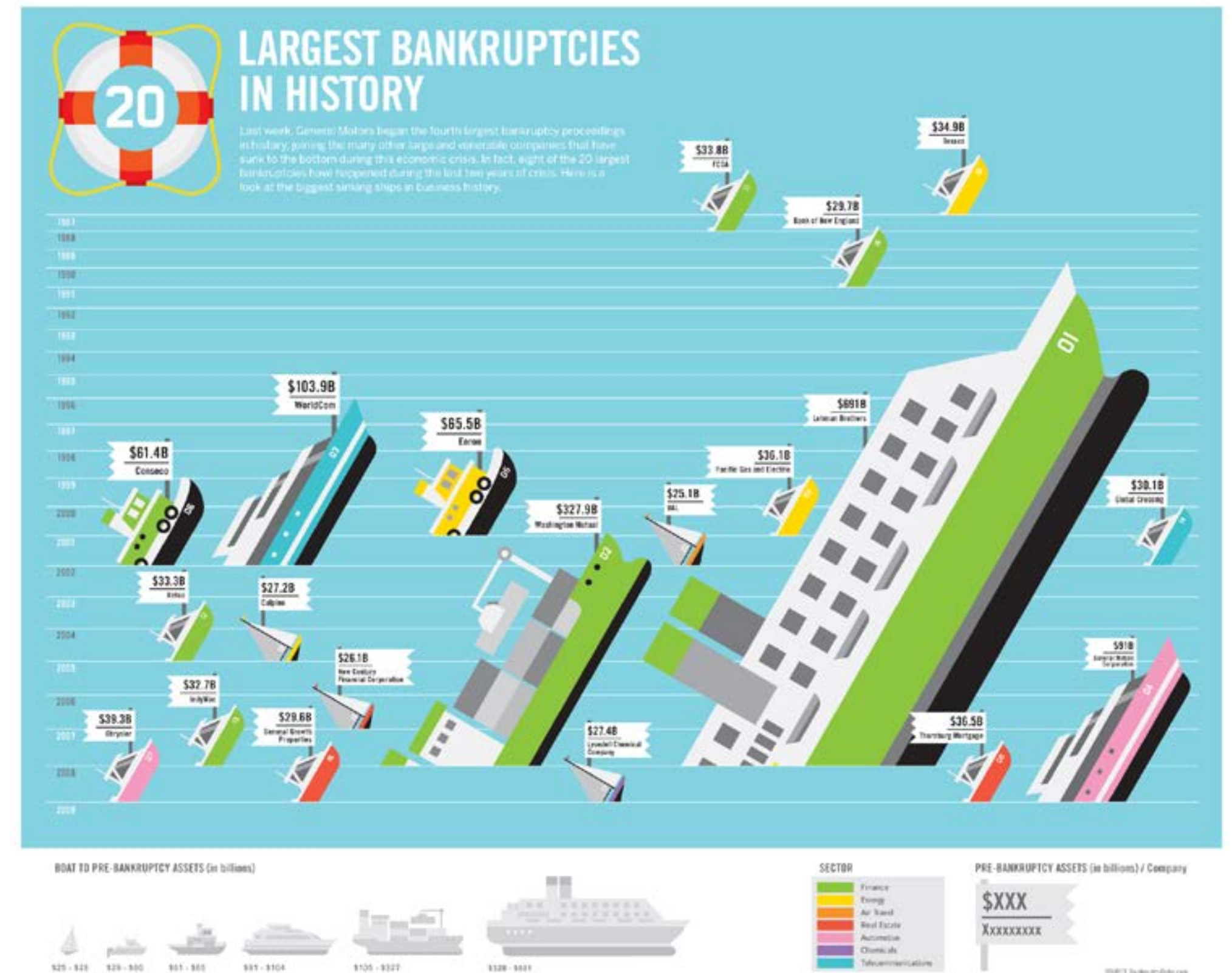"The aspects most apparent on first superficial exposure to the work... production values, finishing"

Elements of design

Surface

"The aspects most apparent on first superficial exposure to the work... production values, finishing"

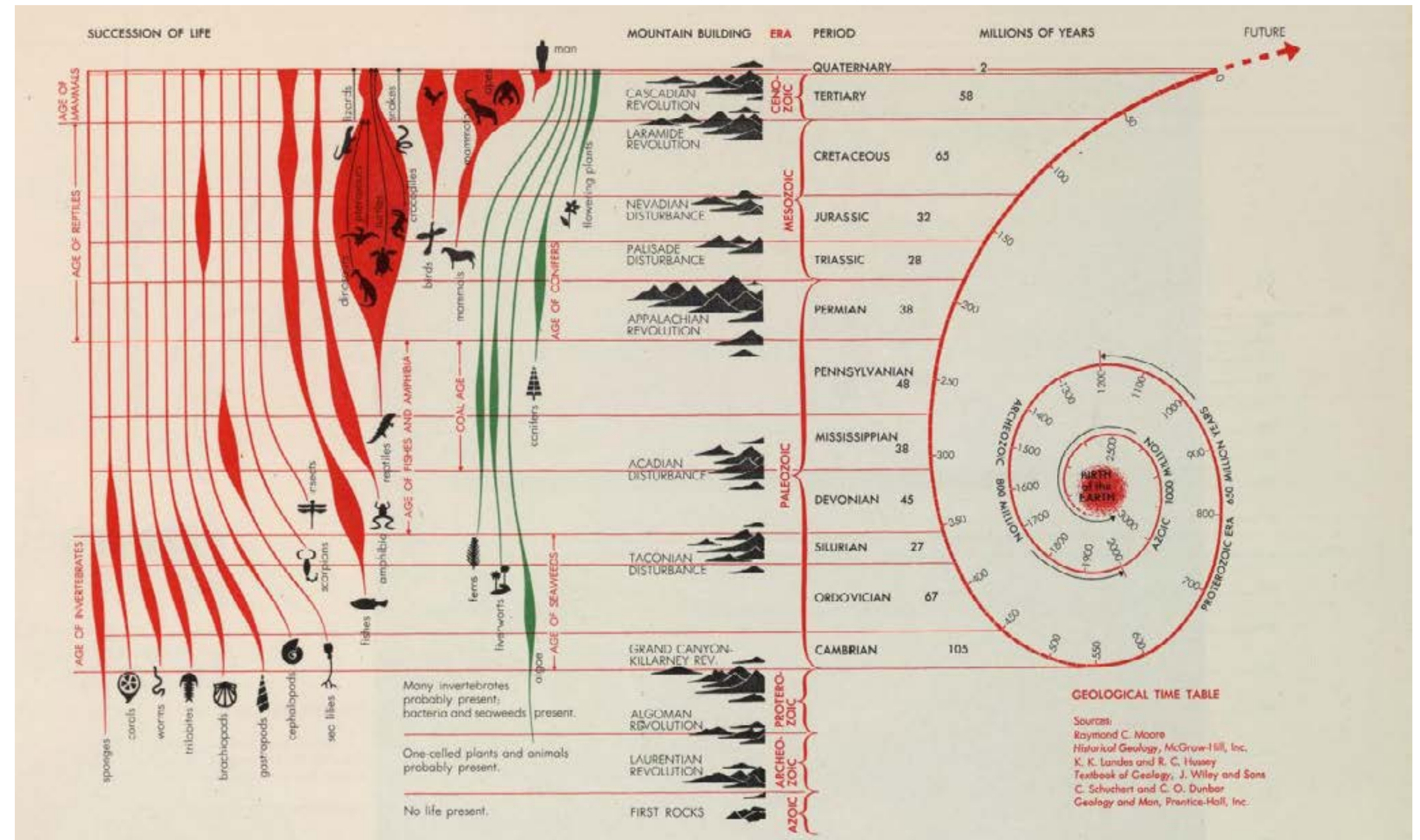# Elements of design

Herbert Bayer

Craft

"Constructing the work, applying skills, practical knowledge, problem-solving, getting the 'job' done"

Elements of design

Scott McCloud

Structure

"Putting it all together,
 what to include what to
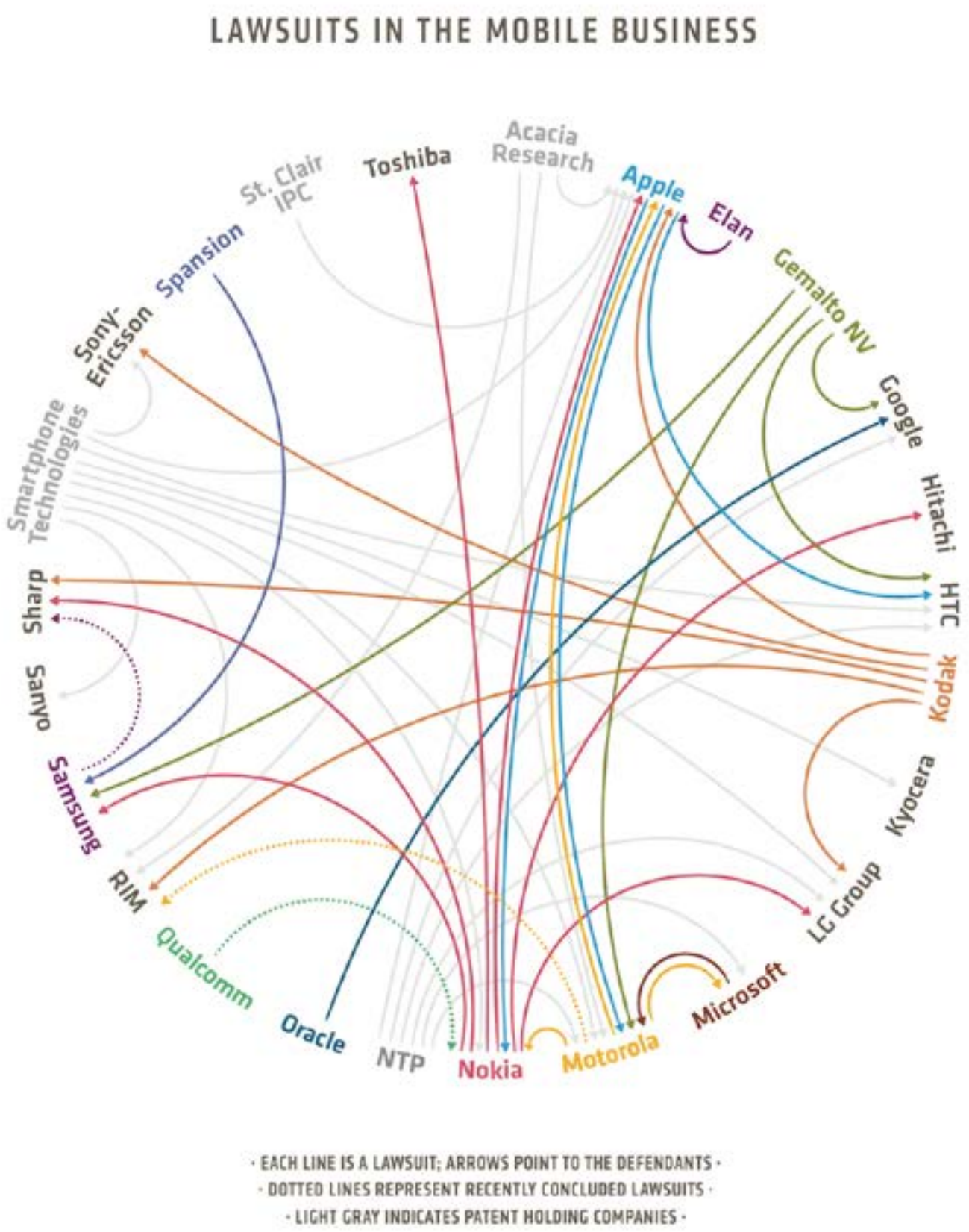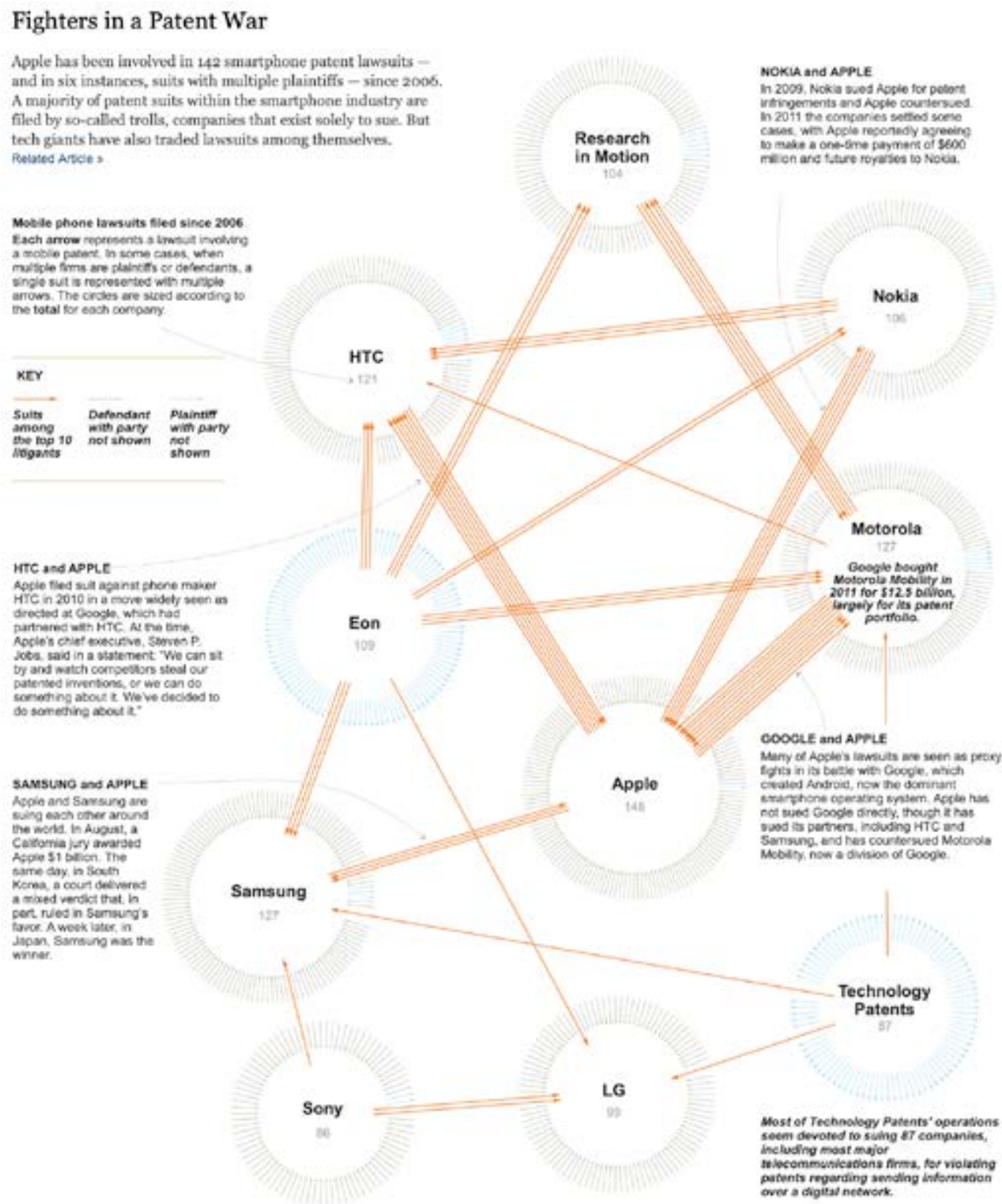 leave out, how to arrange,
 how to compose the work"

Elements of design

Structure

"Putting it all together, what to include what to leave out, how to arrange, how to compose the work"

New York Times

George Kokkinidis

Fighters in a Patent War

Apple has been involved in 142 smartphone patent lawsuits — and in six instances, suits with multiple plaintiffs — since 2006. A majority of patent suits within the smartphone industry are filed by so-called trolls, companies that exist solely to sue. But tech giants have also traded lawsuits among themselves.
Related Article »

LAWSUITS IN THE MOBILE BUSINESS

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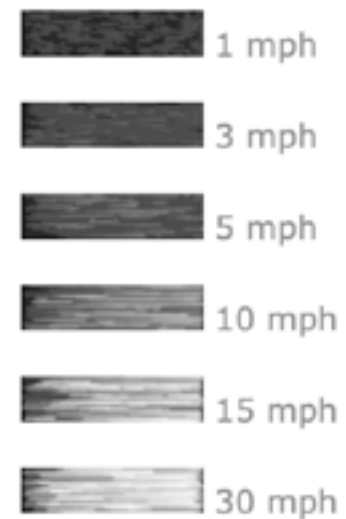· LIGHT GRAY INDICATES PATENT HOLDING COMPANIES ·

Elements of design

Idiom

"The vocabulary of styles, gestures, subject matter, or the genre the work belongs to"

Fernanda Viégas and Martin Wattenberg

July 2, 2022
2:43 am EST
(time of forecast download)

top speed: **28.7 mph**
average: **6.8 mph**
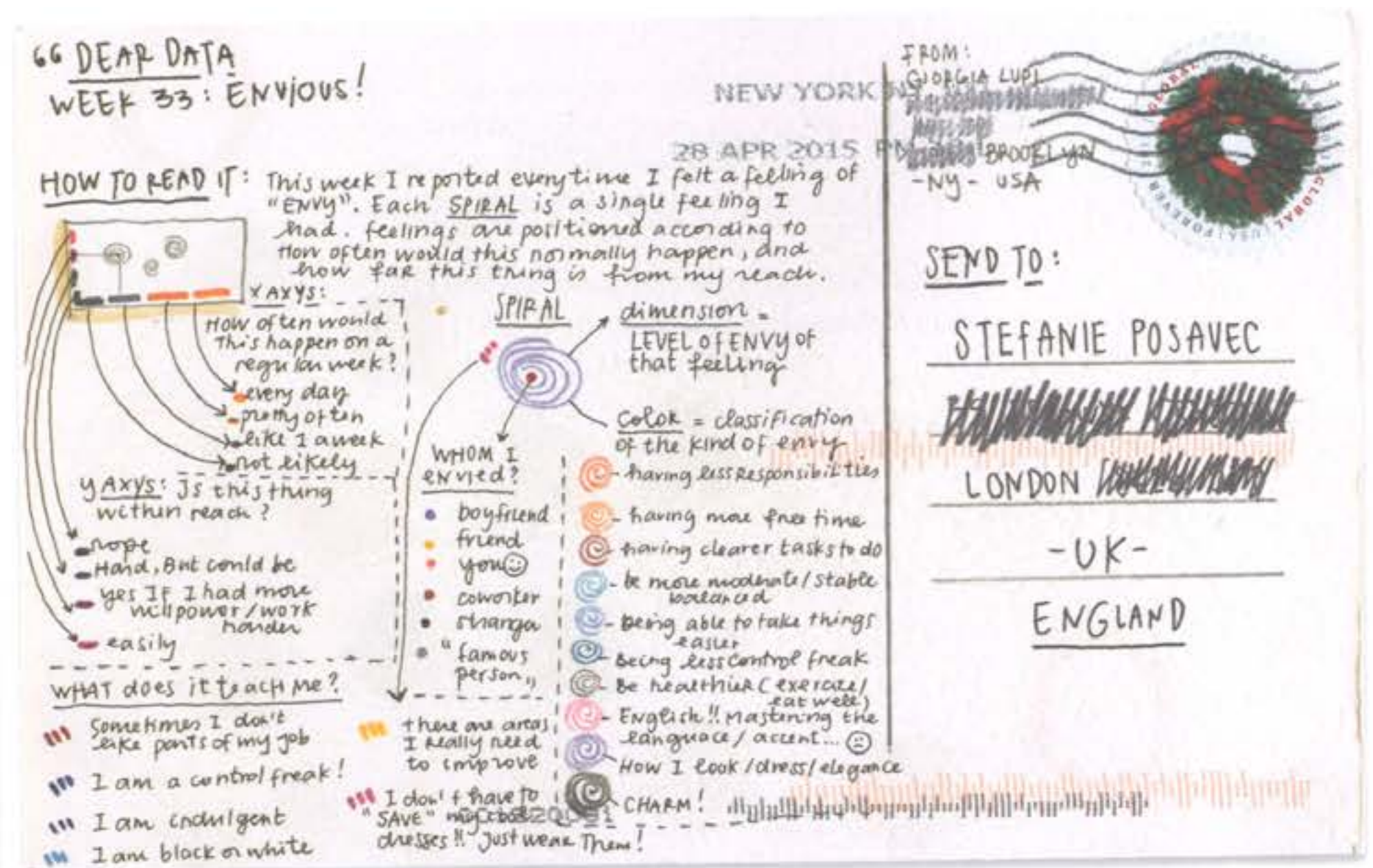
1 mph
3 mph
5 mph
10 mph
15 mph
30 mph

Elements of design

Form

"Will it be a book? A chalk drawing?
A chair? A song? A sculpture? A pot
holder? A comic book?"

Georgia Lupi

Elements of design

Form

"Will it be a book? A chalk drawing? A chair? A song? A sculpture? A pot holder? A comic book?"
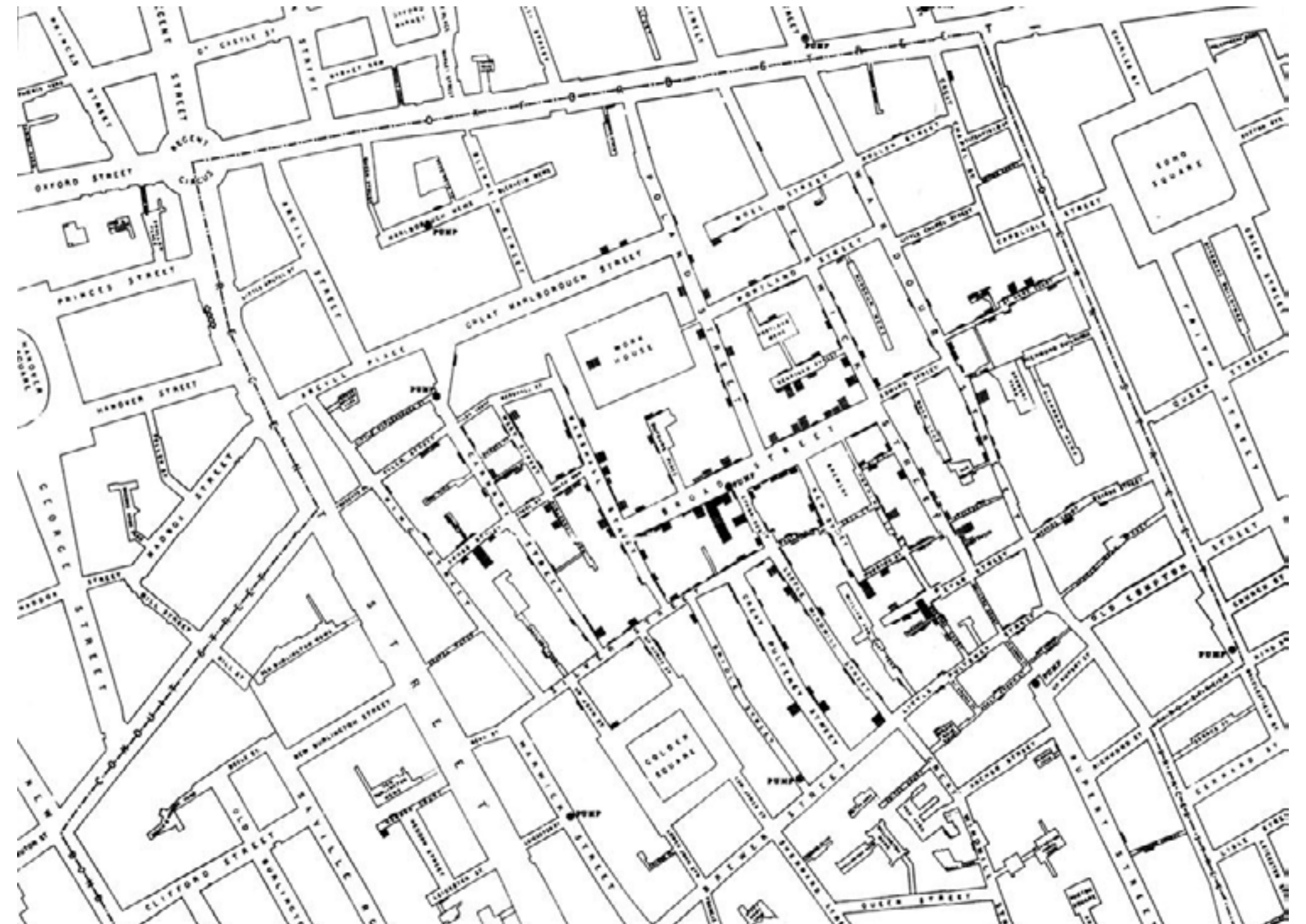
Amy Cesal

10 styles of pizza in Chicago

Roman — Detroit — Sicilian — Stuffed — Deep dish

Tavern or Chicago thin — Thin — Artisan — Neapolitan — NYC

#DayDohViz

Chicago deep dish pizza

Dough in a pan

Cheese

Toppings

Chunky tomato sauce

Optional parmesan cheese

Elements of design

Idea/Purpose

"The impulses, ideas, emotions, philosophies, and purposes of the work"

John Snow

Break

Class basics

· Eight weeks

· A short assignment each week for the first few weeks (please see on Canvas). Desired outcome is to promote discussion in and outside of class. Use a design program that allows you to complete each assignment.

· Assigned readings each week.

· Expect to spend 10–12 hours on the readings and assignment each week.

· Final project: Narrative sequence of multiple forms of data visualization

· Office hours (EST): Tues 7:30–8:00pm, Fri 12:00–1:00pm (by appointment)

· Data visualization is highly subjective. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers. The goal of this class is to develop an understanding of how cognition and narrative work to create visualizations that help your audience understand the material you are presenting.

Class basics

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all meetings of each class. Unexcused absences from as few as two classes will result in a failing grade. Students will be responsible for all activities and assignments during their absence.

Participation

Regular, informed class participation is a weighted portion of your grade. The minimum expectation is that students attend all live sessions and participate meaningfully in the sessions through the chat feature or audio.

Assignments

Unless otherwise noted, assignments will be due by 3:00 am on Tuesday, the night prior to class. Assignments not received on time will receive a 10% deduction for each day late. No assignment will be accepted more than 5 days late.

Class basics

Critique & feedback

· Have a meaningful discussion about a work's various attributes in service of helping to achieve its aim.

· It can help us become more effective at discussing our own work, and offering feedback to others.

· MICA is an art school, and we can use the language and methodology of critique to help us develop our own data visualization practice.

Class schedule

Week 1: Introductions · Importance of design

Week 2: Cognition and perception · Conveying meaning through type

Week 3: Pattern perception · Organizing text

Week 4: Inclusive design and accessibility

Week 5: Building blocks of storytelling · Grids

Week 6: Essence of narrative · Final project sketches

Week 7: Narrative structures · In-progress final projects

Week 8: Final project presentations

Class schedule

Perception and Cognition

· How does the human brain process visual information?

· What tendencies do our eyes and brains tend to follow?

· How can we understand these and incorporate them into our visualization processes?

Accessibility & inclusivity

· What are the ways we an make our work accessible to different types of people?

· How can we expand assumptions about who engages with our design?

Narrative

· How can our visualizations create interest that allows the viewer to invest in the insight?

Learning Objectives

1. Understand foundational principles and concepts of visual cognition and perception and how they may influence how audiences perceive design and/or visualization.

2. Identify potential influences that could impact the cognitive and/or perceptive process in visual design and incorporate those influences as appropriate strategies in a design concept.

3. Be aware of fundamental principles of inclusive design and be able to incorporate them into one's design practices.

4. Recognize the key elements of narrative and demonstrate an ability to incorporate visual storytelling into compelling data visualizations.

5. Employ pre-attentive attributes to direct attention and provide a visual hierarchy of information

6. Synthesize lessons learned to craft a visualization that clearly expresses a narrative drawn from text, visuals, and organization to aid the audience's interpretation of information.

Questions?

Why use a design program?

Questioning defaults

What are the benefits and drawbacks to using defaults?
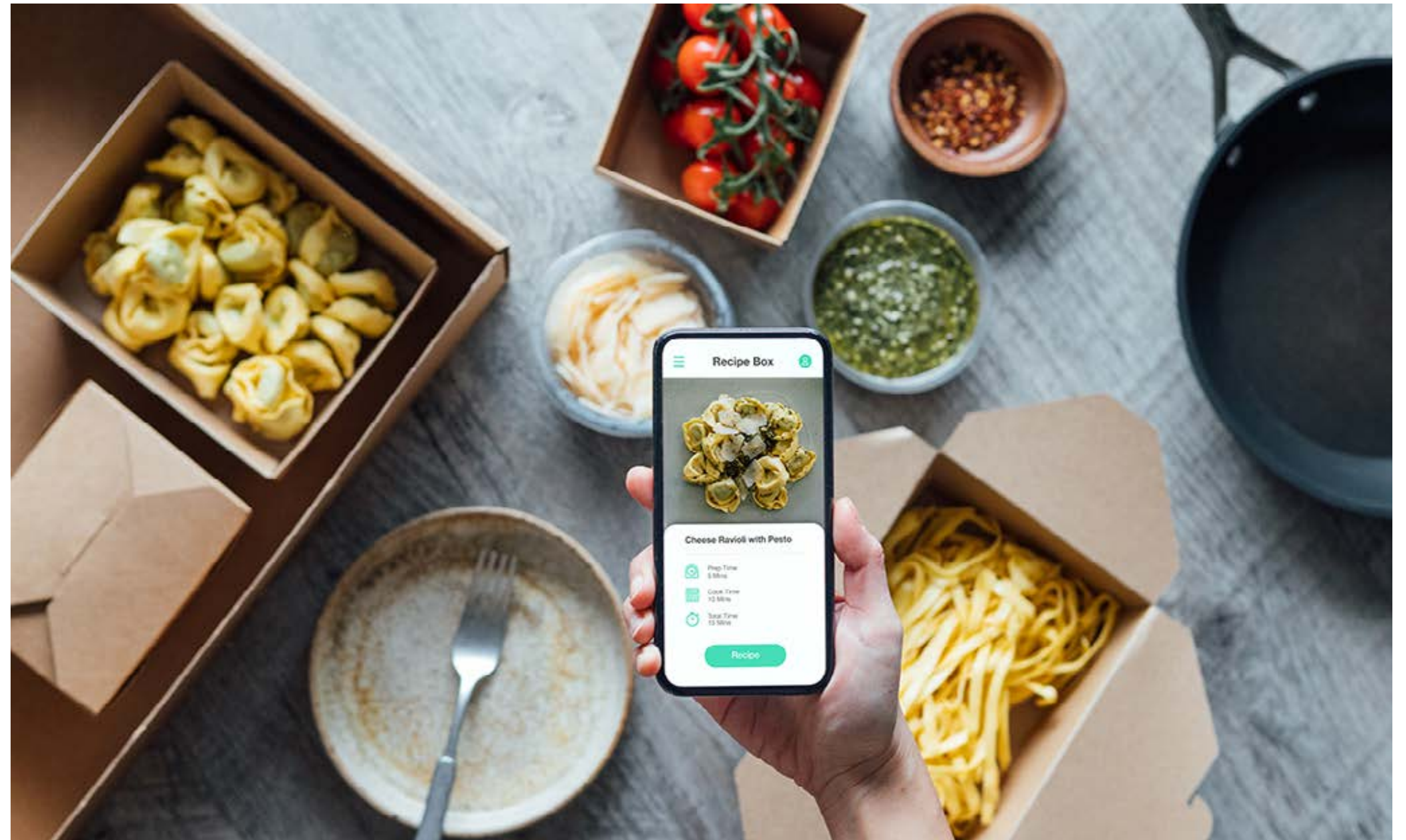
For next week

Reading

- Ware chapters 1, 2
- Lupton chapter 1 (pgs 13-63)
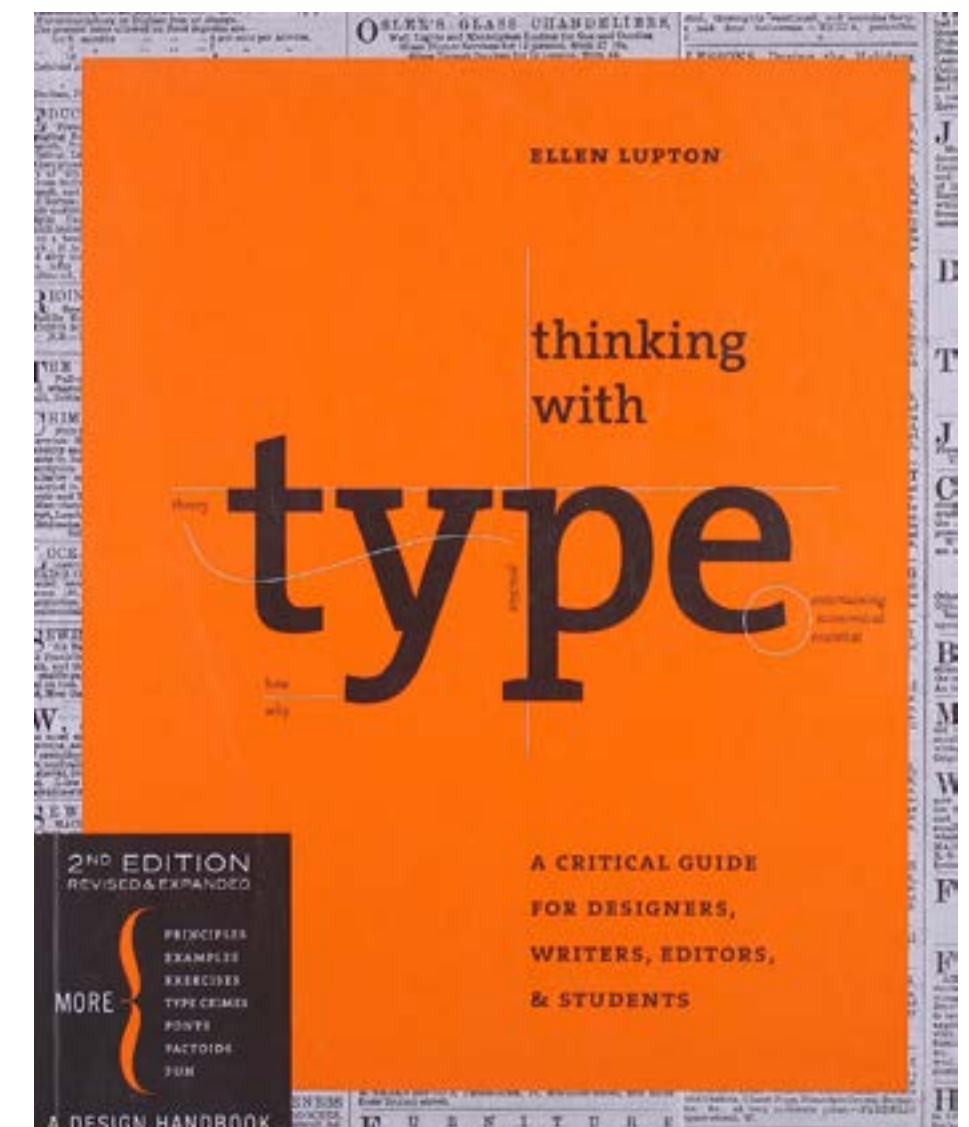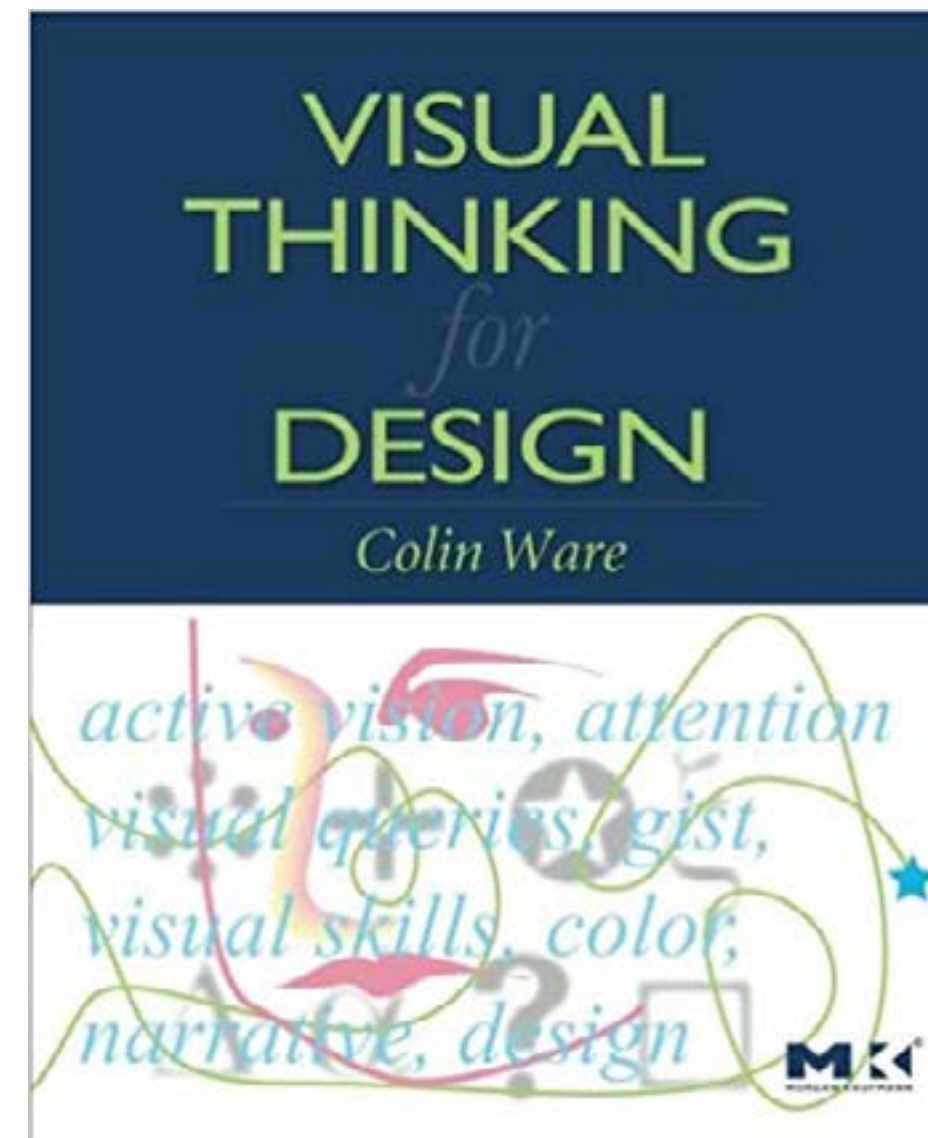
Assignment

Design a visualization using easily collected data.

· Data can be about your daily life, or anything is easily gathered that interests you.

· Draft a sketch that embodies the subject matter in some way. Consider how form, color, and sizing, can best represent the data.

· Create that concept in a design program of your choice (Adobe Illustrator, Figma, etc). Include text for the visualization (title and labels or a key). Try to avoid the default settings.

· Be prepared to share your sketch and visualization during our next class and talk about some decisions you made and how you attempted to create it in the design program.

Georgia Lupi

Assignment ideas

Georgia Lupi

Assignment ideas

Stephanie Posavec

Justin Wheeler

Emily Meltzer

Illustrator demo