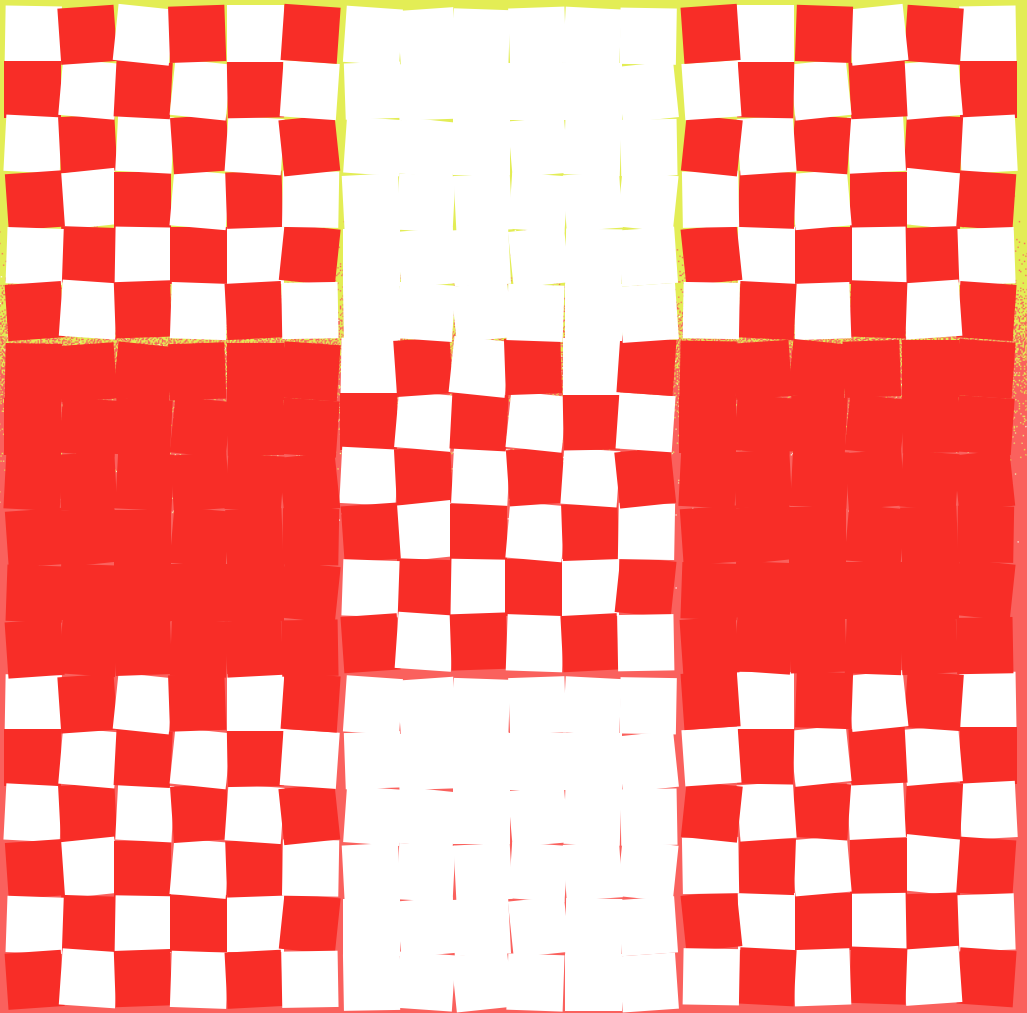


Table Talk



Designing for a Tastier Future

Table Talk: Designing for a Tastier Future

by Kyla Paolucci

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Fine Arts in Graphic Design in the Graphic Design program at Vermont College of Fine Arts, Montpelier, Vermont.

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THAT'S WHAT I WANT
*
TO HEAR YOU ERUPTING

Ursula K. Le Guin
Bryn Mawr College commencement speech, 1986

I ended 2021 feeling like I was living the aftermath of yet another romantic comedy about New York City, after finally finding love and traveling the world. Searching for a different utopia amid the darkness of a global pandemic, I had just settled into the idea of a new identity when my real home called back out for my return, setting the stage for plenty of twists and turns of faith— *what will she do next?*

Part of me dreaded coming back to New York. Having a taste of a different quality of life tethered me to a new place, but the truth is, my heart craved the grueling concrete. It had beaten me up and spat me out more times than I'd had heartbreaks, but often rewarded me to the point of wanting to melt into the sidewalk on the northwest corner of Bryant Park where so many things had been mourned or celebrated. I missed the vastness of heavy, humid air on such a small island where there are so many people and so many restless souls floating around you that you feel like one-in-a-million in the center of the universe, even though Manhattan only covers, like, what... twenty miles?

I'm a graphic designer in New York City undergoing a rehabilitation of sorts after conforming to stale styles and systems that were not my own. This thesis is just as much about legitimizing my experiences as it is about making space for new possibilities. After taking the time to understand my influences, I am putting on a figurative dinner party to invite other ways of seeing and being in the world. This slow-cooked approach acknowledges the interconnectedness of graphic design and its impact on society, while learning what it means to responsibly translate the perspectives of different individuals and communities through it. In shaping how a design practice might allow me to express my view of the world, I hope for others to interrogate and nurture their own.

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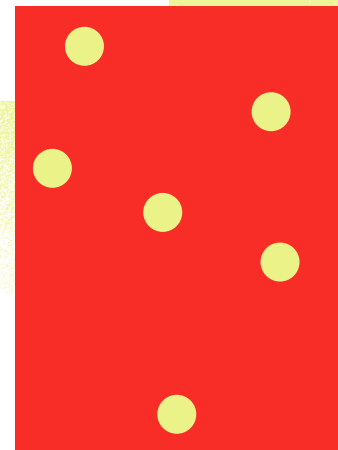
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There's No Place Like Home
Introduction



It's All Natural
Place settings for
contextual inquiry



The Isolation of Hecate
Even witches get the blues...



Service
Expanding environments
through teamwork

Federico
A typeface portrait and
its relational history



Common Materials
Ingredients and recipes
that made this thesis

*and some other
surprises in between!*

There's No Place Like Home

I come from the land of eggplant parmigiana, otherwise known as North Providence, Rhode Island. My background is not extraordinary, although it is the source material for a lot of good TV shows. Raised by an ensemble cast of charismatic Italian American Catholics, I have a penchant for storytelling, home cooking, and saucy attitudes. In a relatively homogeneous environment, moms argue over how much mozzarella you should *not* be using, guarding themselves against too much difference for the sake of being palatable to other Americans. It is here where Tony Soprano is collectively regarded as a god by those who grapple with freeing their inner selves in the face of patriarchal ideals. The desire to fit in to succeed can be so strong that it causes us to conform to long-established structures and norms. Instead of strictly adhering to our ancestral recipes, I believe we can adapt them to better suit our modern tastes. In New York City in 2023, the thirst for nostalgia is stronger than ever, but I see this trend as more of a desire to give form to our experiences rather than to repeat the past. By reflecting on what we bring to the table, we can challenge the systems we've been indoctrinated by and create opportunities to envision a tastier future.

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Sipping on matcha lattes in my gentrified Brooklyn neighborhood may not have been my ancestors' idea of the American Dream, but I know very well how I ended up here. New York is an exhilarating and exhausting place. It's one of the ultimate FOMO landmarks where everything happens and spills over, and where "hard work" lets you explore the excesses of privilege. Each day, I learn of new startups with cutesy names and aesthetically pleasing color palettes. I am surrounded in all dimensions by adoptable personas that cause me, a data-targeted prospect, to feel delight and comfort as I hand over my personal information and become part of a slew of acquisition journeys. Our hours spent creating with digital products have become our greatest currency in such a free-market economy. ② The ease in making basic graphic design is fueled by slick, accessible software that enables anyone with an internet connection to participate in visual communication. Wider accessibility shouldn't diminish the importance of critically skilled designers. In fact, such designers may feel a greater pressure to maintain agency over their areas of expertise and take on a broader range of design practices that can help make expanded worldviews more tangible. ②

By creating environments where we can freely explore the disparate parts of ourselves with others, designers can facilitate practices where we recognize and embrace our diverse skills and traits. I prefer this over the more immediate approach of jumping into graphic design solutions that look good and test well, but do not necessarily reflect our true identities or experiences. I've previously been taught to out-design my personal style and to "be invisible" in order to have a "successful" career. In becoming an educator, I find more value in activating students through their hobbies, histories, and leisure and having them design from there, rather than training them to produce a high volume of *things* that collect data. After spending time in workplaces where critical

My mother and her aunts, 1972.



Design is a Sunday dinner.
It's the labor of making
a five-hour-long gravy
that lasts a week or more
and feeds many.

investigation was sidelined in favor of speedy task-based work, graphic design was largely treated like a drive-thru service.

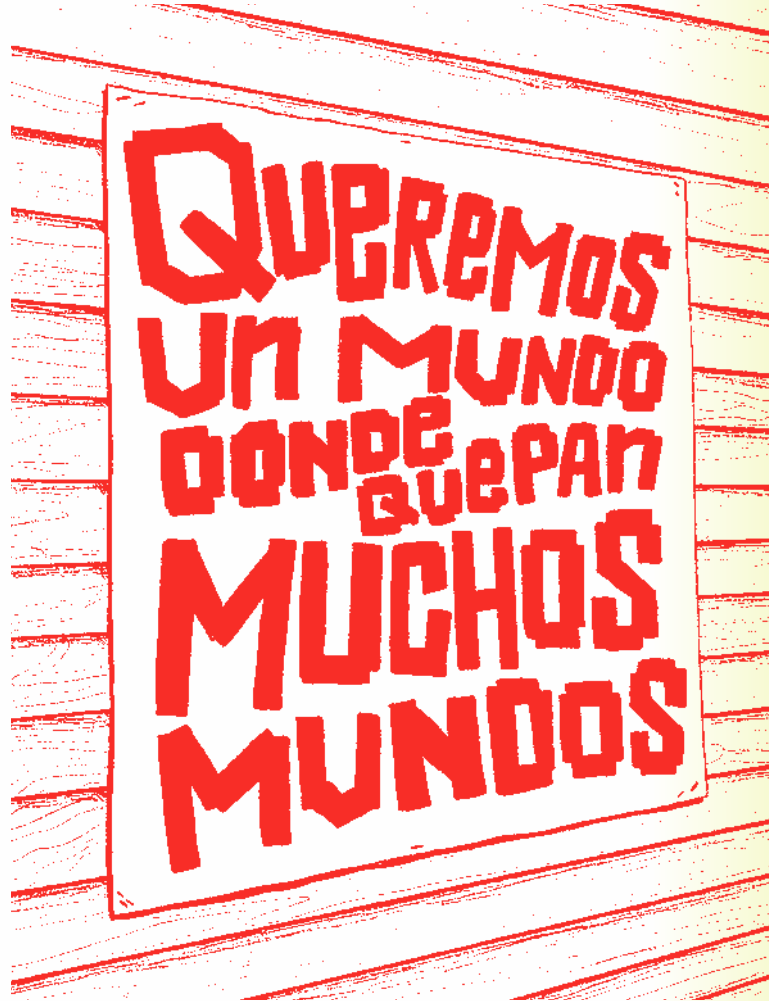
But design is a Sunday dinner. It's the labor of making a five-hour-long *gravy* ③ that lasts a week or more and feeds many. Graphic design can be a practice of love that requires endurance, patience, and new ways of thinking. When designs are created under tight deadlines to fill a digital void, they inadvertently evoke meaning that reflects and sustains a zeitgeist that prioritizes capital gain. If a tech company wants to collect more information on sales leads, their website or advertisements can feature aesthetics and attitudes that prioritize self-care by illustrating how someone can gain more free time with their "all-in-one" software. In taking the time to explore what "free time" means today, we might find that the potential joy of social connection and shared cultural practices is at odds with the organization's real intentions. Big Macs are predictable and delicious, but a potluck dinner with friends expands our palates and satiates the belly of human experience for a fuller sense of support and belonging.

Our tastes and preferences should run deeper than what marketing expects of us. In an effort to treat design as a verb and not a noun, ④ I unpack my history and understanding of society with the red-and-white checkered tablecloth in the zine "It's All Natural," to seek out different forms of contextual inquiry. Graphic design has had a hand in defining the visual stereotypes of my family's postwar, Italian American heritage. These have become significant stylistic choices that uphold our personal version of history and nostalgia. As I nurture my identity, I continue to question the role of vernacular aesthetics and the dominant power structures embedded within them. The familiarity of dressing a local restaurant with red-and-white checkered tablecloths is a foolproof way to train folks' expectations of a warm and authentic

meal. It looks and smells Italian, but is it really going to taste like my mother's? Designing beyond collective practices might result in actually being yourself and having the confidence to bring the weird vegetable to the dinner party.

As a way to create an entry point for diverse perspectives and experiences into my own graphic design practice, the tablecloth becomes a place setting rather than a resolution. Like a good gravy, I first rely on my accumulated ways of working in order to be fully invested in my practice and my livelihood. However, inherited templates and recipes can often have too many limitations that ultimately create the standardized Olive Gardens of the world. My social feed is flooded with typographically seductive paid ads for skin care services, but pastel promises for a perfect complexion fall flat on someone who prefers witchier techniques for self-maintenance. In 2003, Virginia Postrel laid out the extensive groundwork for how we arrived at an age of "look and feel" in *The Substance of Style*. ⑤ Since then, consumers have taken hold of opportunities to express themselves into subcategories of popular culture. This has ultimately helped engineer a robust future for current marketing segmentations and a sea of "style" that is dependent on identity, class, economics, and our digital participation. I've started to wonder if designers have become too comfortable with imposing the libraries of assumed aesthetics onto others rather than willfully sharing the idiosyncrasies and curiosities that make life—and us—more exciting.

Modernism continues to be the foundation of style for most designers of my generation. ⑥ We're practically in autopilot mode as we regurgitate the past to create identities and personas that feel familiar and are authentic enough to remind us of our childhood comforts. But these memories are not shared by all. We do it so often that we have found ways to perfect the honeyed cinematography of nostalgia with automa-



"We want a world where many worlds exist."
Zapatista of Chiapa

Quote extracted from *Designs for the Pluriverse* by Arturo Escobar

tion, sweeping all of its ugly and messy stuff under the rug for a more favorable version of history. Why risk your paycheck on the potential ickiness of the future when you can generate likability with a mashup of algorithmic syntax? We catch glimpses of what popularized beauty looks like when publishing our collaborations with artificial intelligence and treating it like a party game. Perhaps when AI starts doing all of the time-consuming dirty work for us, we'll start valuing imagination, difference, and criticism again. To express my own distaste for a world of generative making where designers and critical thought are removed, I let a spooky alter ego do my rumination for me in "The Isolation of Hecate."

Rather than fighting for power in the places that were not made for us, we must seek ways to make more inclusive environments that do not cause *more* harm.

Who are you behind your preferences and guilty pleasures, and can they inform what you create for others? What makes your eggplant parm better than the next person's? Improvisation, play, and daydreaming are the unsolicited mozzarella that lets us design it upside down and enter into voids without the fear of needing to return. I start to unpack the cognitive dissonance that many designers experience in environments that are not their own and exhibit my own efforts to make effective change through network thinking in "Service." Through my time working as a corporate in-house designer, a goal that many of my design

students hope to achieve, I have identified ways to enrich shared spaces by carving out time to cultivate equity and mutual respect through principles of teamwork. Rather than fighting for power in the places that were not made for certain individuals, communities must seek ways to create inclusive environments that do not cause *more* harm. If we want to work towards a future that is fluid, resources must be accessed freely, and prevailing norms must be challenged.

Graphic design links our experiences and ideologies as we create from our most poignant influences, but I am often in search of extraordinary specimens that make my experiences feel more tangible. My grandfather was the first graphic designer I knew. He wasn't a *goomba* 🙄 and he kept to himself, often wearing a janitor's jumpsuit and long braids to do his yard work and hang at the bar. My art school education trained me to design beauty and perfection in order to sell things, but I think it's just as, if not more, valuable to design within the stench of alcoholism and the burgeoning will of working-class ambition. Nontraditional influences can be just as powerful in shaping design. In my typeface project "Federico," which is named and modeled after my grandfather's practice of sign-making, I explore ideological expression while questioning the pervasiveness of contemporary trends and the underlying hegemony that constrains our making. Through the crude and scrappy act of sharing his ideals through his use of electrical tape and plywood, I've built a playful typeface that relies on humble materials and a story of manifesting abundance from a place of poverty as a form of portraiture.

I'm careful not to directly lift the expressive work of my grandfather without understanding its context. I build upon his authorship to continue the work. Similar insecurities arise as I start to share my acquired knowledge with a new generation. In my first semester as a

Represent
communities

Everyone
designs

Meet people
where they are

Exist
beyond
a role

Rid assumed
postures

TABLE TALK

design educator, I turned toward Sister Corita Kent in her "Ten Rules for Students and Teachers." Rule number 5 reads:

Be self-disciplined: This means finding someone wise or smart and choosing to follow them. To be disciplined is to follow in a good way. To be self-disciplined is to follow in a better way.

Self-discipline is the real work that many graphic designers take on, but we should exercise our autonomy by trusting in ourselves. Designers can be thoughtful cooks who collect the necessary people and ingredients to whip up innovative methods, practices, and archives all while letting our onlookers lick the bowl. In designing our individual practices, we can take advantage of the pros and cons of a Modernist education to effectively choose between form, function, *and* emotion. Establishing preferences by thumbing through our archive of interests, experiences, and influences proves that it is more fruitful to gather than to follow. ☺

As a ritual site where family and friends come together to share a meal and talk about life beyond dessert and coffee, *Table Talk* is where I discover who I am, how I contradict myself, and what I need to become a designer with a heightened sense of agency. In this collection of standalone zines, dinner conversation and family recipes act as metaphors for how community sourcing and relational design methods can create new possibilities, rather than eating the same meal week after week. By actively engaging multiplicity through both individual and group making, I want to find the more expansive parts of ourselves ☺ that can nourish the world we live in by making it a bowl of pasta.

NOTES

1. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "Free Time," in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*. (New York: Routledge, 2001), 187-197.
2. Zoë Ryan, "The Design Imagination," in *Designs for Different Futures*, ed. Kathryn B. Heisinger et al (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2019).
3. *Gravy* is a term used to describe the tomato sauce typically used for Italian pasta dishes or casseroles. It is most commonly used among Italian American communities in the Northeast of the United States.
4. After reading about the graphic design studio Europa and their practice in the Iaspis Forum on Design and Critical Practice, I connect their idea of "design as a verb" to bell hooks' writing from *All About Love*:
Imagine how much easier it would be for us to learn how to love if we began with a shared definition. The word "love" is most often defined as a noun, yet all the more astute theorists of love acknowledge that we would all love better if we used it as a verb.
5. Postrel, Virginia I. *The Substance of Style: How the Rise of Aesthetic Value Is Remaking Commerce, Culture, and Consciousness*. New York: Harper-Collins, 2003.
6. Jeffery Keedy, "The Global Style," *Slanted*, no. 22 (November 2013): 190-195.
7. A *goomba* is a phonetic derivative of the Italian word *cumpa*, referring to the camaraderie in gangs and organized crime.
8. Mindy Seu, "On Gathering," *Shift Space*, no. 1, 2020, <https://www.shiftspace.pub/on-gathering-mindy-seu>.
9. In her book *Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto*, Legacy Russell explores ideas around the expansive self and the refusal of dominant systems with the following verse from Walt Whitman's 1892 poem "Song of Myself" (pp. 18-20):
Do I contradict myself?
Very well then I contradict myself,
(I am large, I contain multitudes.)



This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Donna and Fred.

2023



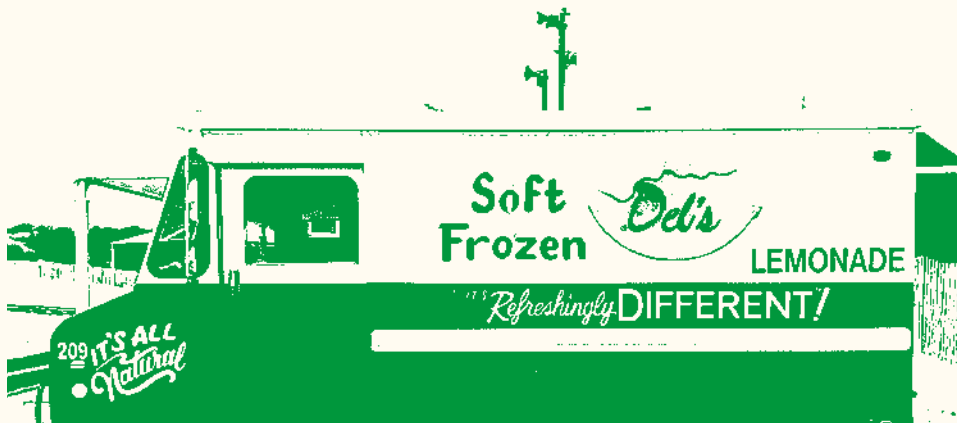
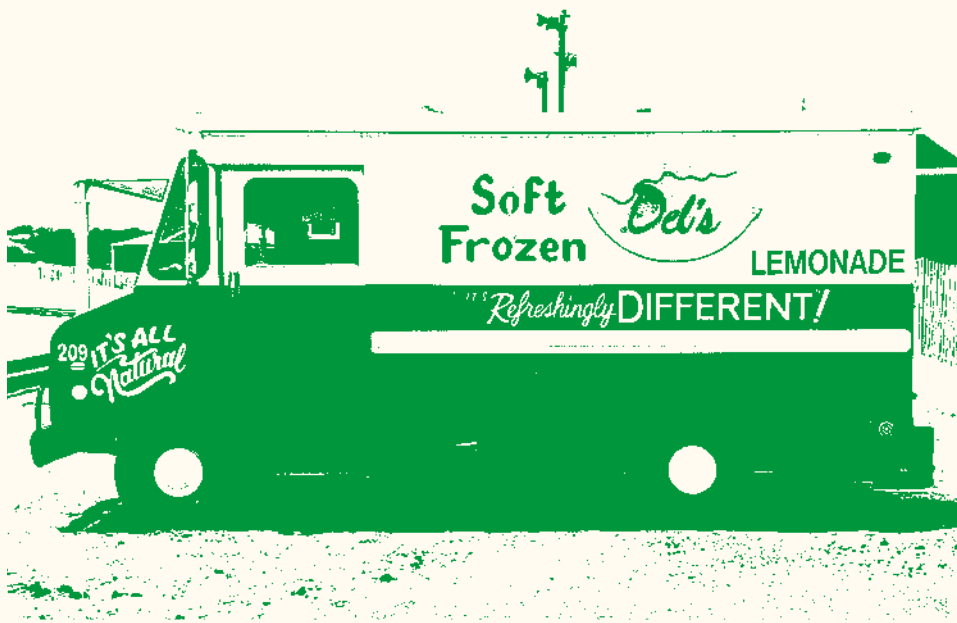
IT'S ALL
Natural

On the right, Paulie Walnuts is sunbathing outside Satriale's Pork Store in the last episode of HBO's *The Sopranos*. Paulie's positioning represents his complacency with a tradition of violence, harm, and control that many of the show's characters are imprisoned by.



Photo by: HBO

Photo by: HBO



For the cover design, I redrew the enamel hand-lettering from an original Del's frozen lemonade truck, a New England icon. Del's is a company in Rhode Island fashioned after the Neapolitan-style treat brought over by the DeLucia family in the early 1900's. They established their first frozen lemonade stand in 1948. The hand-lettering style seems to mimic Max R. Kaufmann's Balloon brush script for American Type Founders, offering appeal to a wider, all-American clientele.

Upon signing the lease for our new apartment, we had big plans for our large outdoor patio. This was a rare find in prime Williamsburg, a Brooklyn neighborhood that used to be populated with Italian, Puerto Rican, and Polish families before the many transitions into what it is now: increasingly gentrified and hardly affordable. Maybe it was the crowbar in the closet or my landlord named Patty—an affectionate nickname for Pasquale—that put me at ease through our shared preservation of Italian heritage. It is very easy for Italians to find community—all they need to do is talk about food and reminisce about organized crime.

Once we got the outdoor table, I immediately bought a simple, red-and-white checkered tablecloth. Other than Italian pizza parlors and mom-and-pop joints, the pattern is something I have associated with coastal elites and the waspy, pastel decor of my childhood bedroom. As an intentional decoration, it's a way for me to connect with others in my adopted city by offering information about who I am and where I come from. It dresses up the mundane reality of an affordable table from Home Depot and refines it into something that feels "authentic" by celebrating my heritage. Often my guests will remark, "Ah! It's like an Italian table!" even if they are not privy to the identity that I am so wrapped up in. Behind its fashion is a place setting for the small ceremony that is my family's Sunday dinners—a gathering where we eat, talk, and enjoy each other's company to dissipate the "Sunday Scaries" ❶ arising ahead of the work week. Many Italian Americans—and others—can find themselves in this ritual, where you're part of something bigger than yourself, and you belong.

Tracing the fabric's origins, I went backward in time to the 1600s to Dutch-colonized Malaysia as the setting of its first mass production, though it likely existed centuries prior. ❷ Mostly referred to as gingham, the name of the fabric is derived from the Malaysian term *genggang*. ❸ Interestingly, it was an extremely simple weave to execute compared to the type of warp-and-weft weaving patterns that started to be produced in surrounding cultures in Southeast Asia while gingham grew popular in the States. These included intense and complicated *ikat* fabrics produced by the Iban people which were rooted in significant spiritual meaning. ❹

In post-colonial Malaysia, there are numerous categories for different weaves, all of which are far more



1. The term "Sunday Scaries" refers to the feelings of anxiety and stress that some people experience on Sundays, usually when thinking about the upcoming workweek and their responsibilities. Wine, pasta, and hugs are proven to be excellent remedies.
2. Pietro Lorenzetti, *Nativity scene of the Virgin*, c. 1335, Siena.
3. Mark Dent, "Gingham Never Seems to Go Away." *Vox*, July 1, 2019, <https://www.vox.com/the-gods/2019/7/1/18758489/gingham-fabric-pattern-summer-finance-bro-prairie>.
4. Traude Gavin. *The Women's Warpath: Iban Ritual Fabrics from Borneo* (Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History, 1996).

THE WOMAN'S WARPATH



Iban is an indigenous tribe in Borneo that practices egalitarianism. Success is a matter of personal achievement rather than inherited rank. Before adopting more modern lifestyles, men were headhunters, and women found their way by weaving *pua* textiles, a traditional woven fabric used for various purposes such as making clothes and blankets, which is still practiced today. Designing and weaving a *pua* is said to pose serious, perceived risks and is held to a similar significance to the male warriors' act of headhunting. Collecting the heads of enemies brought good fortune, while dreaming up new weaving patterns cultivated success and conveyed the acquisition of a newfound identity.

Making new cloth is seen to be a form of war. The weave's "supernatural" powers could endanger the weaver, who is at the interface of the physical and spiritual world. But they can also empower her patterning. The development of new patterns increases a weaver's social status due to creativity and originality, as does becoming a dye maker—which few women dared to attempt. Women who make dye become community leaders, much like the male leaders of headhunting expeditions.

Ceremonial cloth (*pua kumba*) from Sarawak, ca 1935. Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences

SECURITY AND COMFORT

ornamental than the widely distributed check. ⁵ For gingham, the ease of its ikat production—from pre-dyeing the fibers to weaving them—enabled more people to become aware of its versatile properties and replicate its pattern according to need. In graphic design today, we often use a library of styles to simplify and refine our ideas to offer general appeal to our specific, intended audiences. Embedded within those libraries is the comfy reign of Modernism that promotes particular variations of style.

In its vast history, gingham has outfitted many cultures. The East India Company, an India-based British trade company, gradually shipped gingham to English merchants. France and Denmark followed suit, and the fabric made its way around Europe and colonized America. In the 1930s it was further popularized as costuming for Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*, steadily making its mark on American fashion during a time when everyday life was strained by

5. In late 2022, historian and collector of Malay textiles John Ang designed the exhibit *Splendours of Malay World Textiles* at Menara KEN TTDI in Kuala Lumpur. He identifies twelve major categories ranging across methodologies including appliqués, warp-and-weft ikat, block printing, and embroidery.



6. J. G. Melon is one of my favorite burger joints in New York City. They state on their website, "With our Melon decor, green and white table cloths, old-time jukebox, and outdoor cafe, we are committed to the J. G. Melon tradition... Providing our customers with the quintessential New York City burger experience."
7. The Vichy check takes its name from the region of France where it is said to have been popularized in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
8. Russell Shorto, "What My Mobster Grandfather Understood About American Capitalism," *Time*, March 17, 2021, <https://time.com/5947270>.



financial collapse and war. An all-American staple, gingham eventually became a marker for security and comfort. Customizing the color variants for the two overlapping threads honored the owner's heritage, such as the use of green and white to dress a table at an Irish-owned pub. ⁶ To underscore the prestige of the fabric in America, we can look toward the 1970s interior design choices of Gloria Vanderbilt and her posh use of the Vichy check. ⁷

On the coattails of acknowledging fashion and capital gain followed a group of lower-ranking immigrants—the American Mafia—who found ways to mimic a greedy approach to a free market economy coupled with cronyism—another American mainstay. ⁸ While serving patrons family values on gingham-dressed dinner tables, they remained staunch stewards of their own family traditions and faith, both in crime and in blood. It may seem like a stretch to say that an everyday tablecloth uncovers a story about

postwar existence in America, but its use as stereotypical vernacular plays a central role in the many choices that a designer may make when crafting an identity palatable enough for a dominant culture.

Being Italian is an enduring ideology that my family clutches to their chests like god-fearing grandmas with rosary beads, because of the acceptance it offers them. However, a distinction must be made between being Italian from Italy and being Italian from anywhere else. In Giannino Malossi's collection *Volare: The Icon of Italy in Global Pop Culture*, the Italian identity is portrayed as being based on how we live our lives rather than the government of an actual state. ⁹ Such an idea continues to permeate today through industrial design, film, food, and fashion. Before my Catalan partner met my family, he challenged the logistics of our assumed identity by commenting that we are not like our European counterparts due to our societal and economic conditions, as much as we might want to fashion ourselves to be. After an initiation of intense togetherness, he accepted that our heritage is an echo of *the Italian way* ¹⁰ in how we conduct ourselves, though setting itself apart as its own particular community. Most of my family members have never stepped foot in their mother country, let alone outside of the Northeast. However, *mappines* ¹¹ with the map of Italy through its regional pasta—and other souvenirs created for folks like us—find a place in all of our homes as we perform otherness to differentiate ourselves from a culture we pledge to and benefit from.

Italian Americans have a tendency of preserving their way of life through the course of many generations. This results from maintaining community by building rituals and systems to protect and sustain it,

9. Giannino Malossi, *Volare: The Icon of Italy in Global Pop Culture* (New York: Monacelli, 1999).
10. In *The Italian Way: Food and Social Life*, Douglas Harper and Patrizia Faccioli present the local customs associated with the Italian table in Bologna, Italy.
11. *Mappines* are dish towels. They are always in use while cooking and cleaning. My family pronounces this as MAH-peen in our Calabrian dialect.



12. *Strega Nonna* was one of my favorite children's books. She's a good witch.
13. A nod to novelist Tom Robbins, who wrote *Even Cowgirls Get the Blues*.
14. Michael Rock, "Fuck Content," in *Multiple Signatures: On Designers, Authors, Readers and Users*, ed. Michael Rock (New York: Rizzoli International, 2013).

like church, food, and organized crime. Thanks to the rise of Italian culture in postwar America, folks used their whiteness to capitalize on their othering due to the iconography of the European flair that they embodied, moving beyond the head-scarfed *Strega Nonna* ¹² stereotypes, and into modern sexiness. The formula for being marketable in America—and becoming American—continues to be about centering personal gain and taking advantage of its impact. The role of graphic design is essential in upholding the narratives within aesthetic formulas and bringing them into the future beyond our societal behaviors. Thanks to an array of design choices, Italian restaurants have the ability to transport you to an imagined memory of Sicily where menus are inscribed in their mother tongue, but Bronx accents as heavy as subway cars make up the ambiance. ¹³

Each time I travel somewhere new, I have an exhausting habit of observing as many storefronts as possible. In an unfamiliar place, it helps me take a mental inventory of what it looks like, who its people are, and what they're into. To summon a piece of canonical design writing, the premise of Michael Rock's essay "Fuck Content" is that graphic design offers us a contextual subtext for what it feels like to be living now. ¹⁴ If the content of design reveals itself differently from place to place, it may be worth understanding who is doing the designing. Graphic design, at large, caters to the pervasiveness of Modernism, which has created the tools and formulas we use to be successful. No one is *just* a graphic designer. Design helps us survey how we experience life and ultimately enter into environments where we become responsible for influencing culture. These ideas are explored in much more depth in the essay "Typecast" by Sojin Kim and Somi Kim, who

PRESERVING COMMUNITY AND HISTORY BEYOND WHAT A DOMINANT CULTURE EXPECTS TO SEE IS A THRILLING AND REBELLIOUS ACT.

surveyed the multivocality of vernacular typography in Los Angeles. They state that there is a conscious choice for self-representation when a person from a marginalized culture capitalizes on the semiotics of “otherness” to appeal to a dominant culture’s appetite for something more exotic than itself. 15

If Italians had to rely on the semiotics of a stereotypical tablecloth to turn some tables, more marginalized and non-white cultures rested on limited stylistic tropes—and a Latin character set—to achieve commercial

15. Sojin Kim and Somi Kim, “Typecast,” in *LIFT AND SEPARATE: Graphic Design and the Vernacular*, ed. Barbara Glauber (New York: The Herb Lubalin Study Center of Design and Typography, 1993), 32-37.
16. Anthony Bourdain was an American celebrity chef, author, and travel documentarian. Through culinary adventures and compelling storytelling, he had significant cultural impact by bringing to light diverse food cultures, breaking down cultural barriers, and influencing a generation of food lovers, travelers, and chefs to appreciate the cultural significance of food and the power it holds in bringing people together.

success by pigeonholing their real identity into a style that is far more condensed than their lived experience. Luckily and optimistically, we are beginning to acknowledge and celebrate more communities and the worlds they offer through their use of graphic design that activates a intimate understanding of heritage. We may not need any more Italian restaurants named after our grandmothers, but the hegemonic constant evolves its pedigree to pressure us into dressing a particular way for desired results. How deeply genuine or superficial we choose to be in sharing our individual styles is measured by the services we offer and if we can afford the privilege of changing the scenery. Preserving community and history beyond what a dominant culture expects to see is a thrilling and rebellious act.

In 2021, Stanley Tucci snagged an Emmy Award for hosting the escapist, Bourdain-esque 16 food travel show *Searching for Italy*—which has since been canceled by its network. As COVID-19 vaccines became widely available in the States with potential international travel on the horizon, flocks of Italian American moms yearned for a plane ride *anywhere* accompanied by a man sporting fine wool sweaters and fashionable eyeglasses. When I first began investigating my own ethnographic identity through graphic design, my mother chided my efforts in her charming, New England way: “What are you doing that hasn’t been done already? Italian identity is overdone and overexploited. All of the recipe books have been made. By the way, have you watched Stanley Tucci’s *Searching for Italy* on Netflix yet? It’s SO good and he is SO chic.”

As Tucci sashayed through regional villages amidst the aftermath of a pandemic in a country still healing from despair, each drip of gooey burrata seemed drenched

in the American lust for experience, under the guise of supporting a place where life and all of its ingredients seemed timelessly beautiful. Not insignificantly, Stanley Tucci is beautiful too—an idea confirmed by Helen Rosner of *The New Yorker* in her seductive critique of the program. ¹⁷ There was even an episode where toes were dipped into a lukewarm debate with one Italian subject's allegiance to the Fratelli d'Italia, Italy's far-right political party, but it only left Tucci to be admired as a somewhat daring American TV show host. I wondered what Tucci was telling me that I didn't already know, other than his small showings of social anxiety and his obvious love for gastronomic treasures. In searching for whatever part of Italy is left in my history aside from the Disney Princess version of it, I would likely find generational mood disorders, a lack of intellectual pursuits, and the relentless greed that sustains our ambition. These things are too heavy and disruptive to our harmonious tablescapes, ¹⁸ and muttering them at a family dinner would earn you the smack of a wooden spoon.

Aside from Tucci's celebrity status, *Searching for Italy* lifts a mirror to the efforts of preserving a cultural fantasy that is admired by many. The popularity of the show proves how we cling to familiar formulas for such programming by opting for the rosier side of travel destinations without getting into the ugly. Graphic design in America is largely treated the same way as popular entertainment. Jeffery Keedy has stated that, when using the nostalgic tropes of vernacular, designers cling to the familiar shores of Modernism rather than taking advantage of their hard-won autonomy to make more significant contributions to design. ¹⁹ The constant reuse of old tricks and stories requires practitioners to become aware of themselves



17. Helen Rosner, "The Timeless Fantasy of Stanley Tucci Eating Italian Food," *The New Yorker*, March 17, 2021.

18. I first heard of this term at my fifteen-year high school reunion when a classmate told me about her own design business where she arranges place settings for holidays and special events.

19. Jeffery Keedy, "The Global Style," *Slanted* no. 22 (November 2013).

20. Stanley Tucci eating real Prosciutto di Parma with Nicola Salvadori in Season 1, Episode 3, "Bologna." CNN.

and of the audiences they are designing for when relying on these choices. This can mean thoughtfully cherry-picking the influential styles that sprout out of our own experiences to make something more flavorful to share with others. We might also evolve our understanding of what already exists by seeking out collaborators and researchers who know their way around a place better than we do. This is what made Anthony Bourdain so great: in seeking out local experts to guide his travels, Bourdain's willingness to listen and learn from others allowed him to create immersive experiences for his audience instead of glossing over the rougher details.

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in every city, becoming nearly as decentralized as the food itself. 🍷 Still, what it means to me will be different than what it means to others. In a new city, a gingham tablecloth points us toward authentic homemade cooking at an affordable price point. It's an easy prop for film production when providing a sense of place to an audience to give them greater access to the story. While vicious, suited mobsters dine on clams and a bottle of Chianti on my TV screen, I'm reminded of spending quality time at a local pizzeria after my under-ten soccer team won a big game. Someone else may be prompted to think about family barbecues or romantic picnics in Central Park. I've almost gotten tired of spotting it practically everywhere in the past year, but it doesn't deter me from holding on to my little thread of its ubiquity as I use it contextually in my own home. Without meaningful context, we indirectly extend the shelf life of what we think works best rather than making room for our own lived experiences to surface—especially as creative processes become increasingly automated.

As designers, we will continue to lionize particular treatments of the past through AI and open-source processing tools 🧠 and must take the time to understand the immunity of dominant styles and how they originated. Despite our critical thinking, we often fall back on these choices because they look nice or feel familiar—or because our employers are instructing our production. We must be present at the table to suggest innovative aesthetics for different audiences, deconstruct our tastes, and make room for more delicious narratives. Instead of method acting to design for an audience that we aren't a part of, we can bring in other people who can critically guide our design thinking—along with conjuring up our stories that

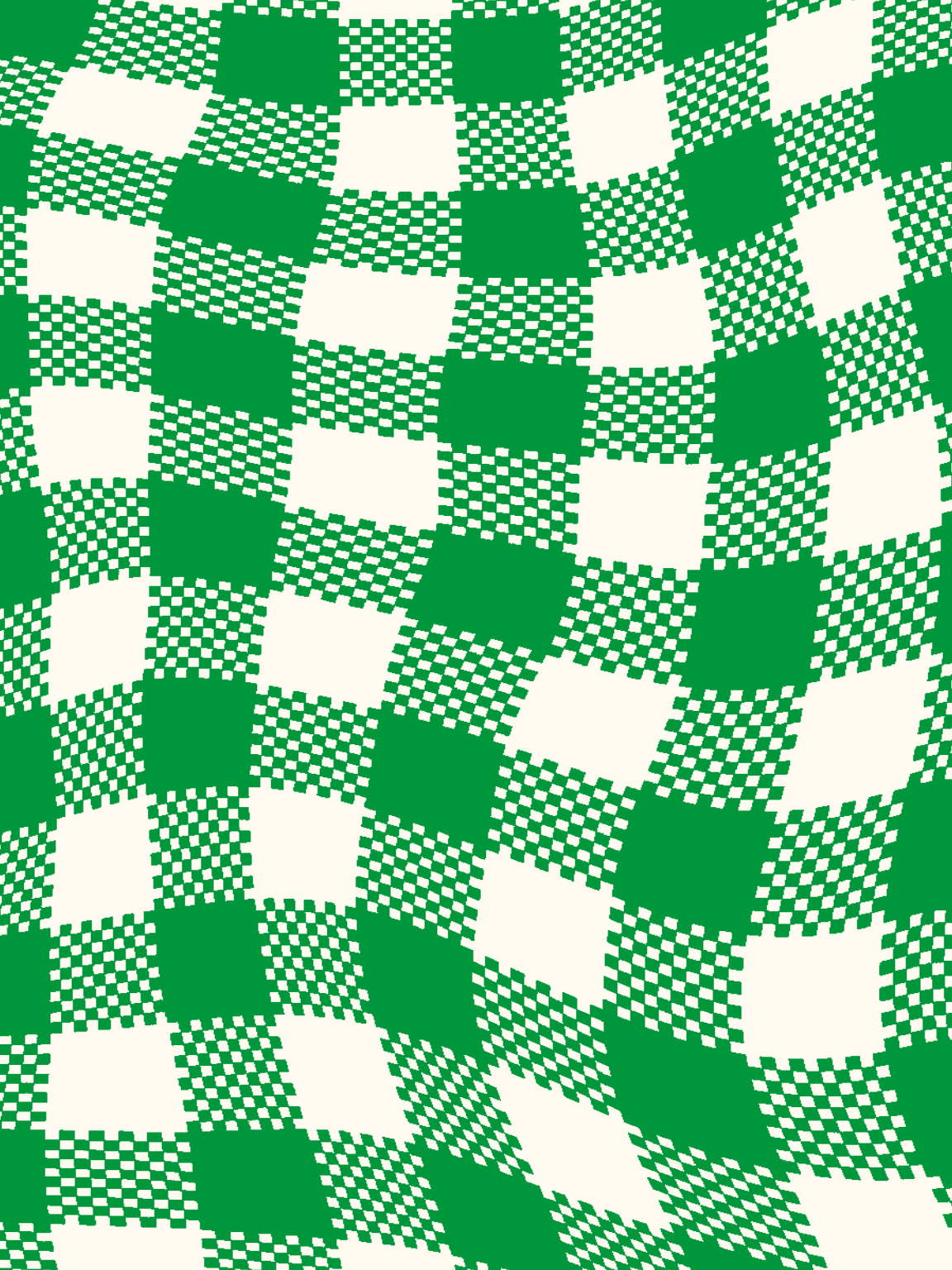
lurk beneath the surface—which might result in more exciting and inclusive work. The problem here is that many of us may not have the privilege to overrule the domineering, stylistic desires of the C-level folks who perpetuate the status quo. In hopes of dethroning the hierarchies of taste-making, we can begin by deliberately slowing down the process to figure out what we should be making, finding equitable control over new tools, or allowing our more interesting narratives to unravel within shared design environments.

Whether we brand a fine Italian restaurant like a Chuck E. Cheese or display the phallic bottle opener we took home from our recent trip to Mykonos for our conservative family members to inquisitively handle, celebrating unexpected choices can expand our palates. Shouldn't we want that? When we enter others' homes, we might uncover constellations of references layered within their way of doing things. Imagining a more optimal version of ourselves shouldn't require fitting in. If my middle school crush on the lanky goth kid who was obsessed with Chevelle  says anything about me, I think it's cooler not to fit in—but it doesn't hurt to have a fan club that supports your contradictions.

In my choice to keep the red-and-white-checked tablecloth as my decoration, I reconcile with my heritage and history as I figure out a way to make my own small dissents. In unpacking what nostalgia is for me, I am aware of how to keep evolving and changing with time. Rather than surrounding ourselves with people who are cut from the same cloth, we can start to thread together new tapestries for a richer conversation to help us better understand ourselves.

22. Scott Weiner, *Viva la Pizza! The Art of the Pizza Box* (New York: Melville House, 2013).
23. Alif Ibrahim, "Machine Learning: Are designers even needed anymore?," *It's Nice That*, August 17, 2022, <https://www.itsnicethat.com/features/machine-learning-are-designers-even-needed-anymore-richard-turley-guest-edit-graphic-design-170822>.
24. Chevelle is a "nu metal" rock band from Chicago, Illinois. When I first downloaded "The Red" from Kazaa—a popular peer-to-peer file sharing program in the early 2000s—I sighed, knowing there was not much of a future for Mario and me.





The
Isolation *of*
Hecate





After the massive outbreak of bovine tuberculosis overtook the magick population, Hecate fled Queens to reunite with her lover in Ixelles. The Ten of Cups, where Hecate had been contracted to produce an array of potions for hedonistic covens throughout the continent, was under new management by pustule-ridden elves from dark magick combat backgrounds who knew nothing about what it took to craft high-quality rituals for increased senses, vitality, and pleasure. Witches and elves have always been at odds.

Hecate had spent years leading a team of young witches who brought along exciting new methods, inventive Latin prose, and plant-based ingredients to an otherwise arduous process. Alas, the latest expansion of Ten of Cups downgraded bespoke potions to the level of takeaway food. Youth serums were made from cheap whale excretions, dressed up and delivered like a trendy direct-to-consumer service. Careful labor was sidelined in favor of faster tactics that tripled the pipeline to improve product reach into the deeper avenues of The Underworld around the globe.

Though Hecate was distraught over the unfortunate chain of events stemming from both the disease and the automation of her craft, she knew that chasing after her hunky Gorgon lover, Cestla, would be fun enough to help make the troubling work conditions somehow bearable. After all, she was a head witch and managed to afford herself duty-free movement throughout The Underworld.

In Belgium, Hecate spent her days drinking warm cappuccinos on cold, gray streets while

eating expertly crafted croissants. Once the hour struck half-past sixteen, she confined herself to the vampire dungeon while Cestla and their blood-sucking pals pillaged. She didn't vibe with vampires, but she stomached their stench in the interest of being perceived as "chill." Hecate often worried about neglecting Cestla, so she thought being kind and accepting of their brutish friends would balance out her feelings of shame and guilt for her devotion to work. She had given many years to her craft and refused to allow an elf kingdom to summon its downfall.

She set up a remote workplace filled with totems for optimal performance:

and increased focus!

a new laptop

Since she and her work coven had been isolated from each other, they worked over video calls and trained an AI to create a spell generator for at-home potion making. This was sad, but they got paid well to do less fulfilling work.

lighting

Though her Leo moon favored the sun, persianas blocked light from entering the dungeon which was actually on the third floor. She sometimes opened them to watch for magpies, her favorite bird.

ergonomics

A laptop stand to counteract the hard, wooden stool she sat on for hours.

A wireless mouse to reduce hand cramping.

AirPods and brown noise playlists to drown out the piercing screams.

Coffee. Water.

basic needs

Pre-prepped, poached endives in citrus and butter for a comforting snack.

back-up

A hard drive in case of mass layoffs due to a tumultuous market and inflation.

An iPad for potential work on the go. She found it difficult to disconnect from screens.

location

Access to a clean bathroom which was more difficult if there was prey around.



Things got pretty rocky with Cestla. Even after convincing them to join her back in Queens once her travel allowance expired, Cestla grew tired of being with someone who went from being fiery and exciting to offering no more than their PR faerie ex who built cookie-cutter sparkle-dust startups with kitschy one-word names like Parsley and Thyme. Completely one-dimensional!

She lost her skills in making any spells of real hedonistic value and instead spent her days exhausting herself over templating mass-

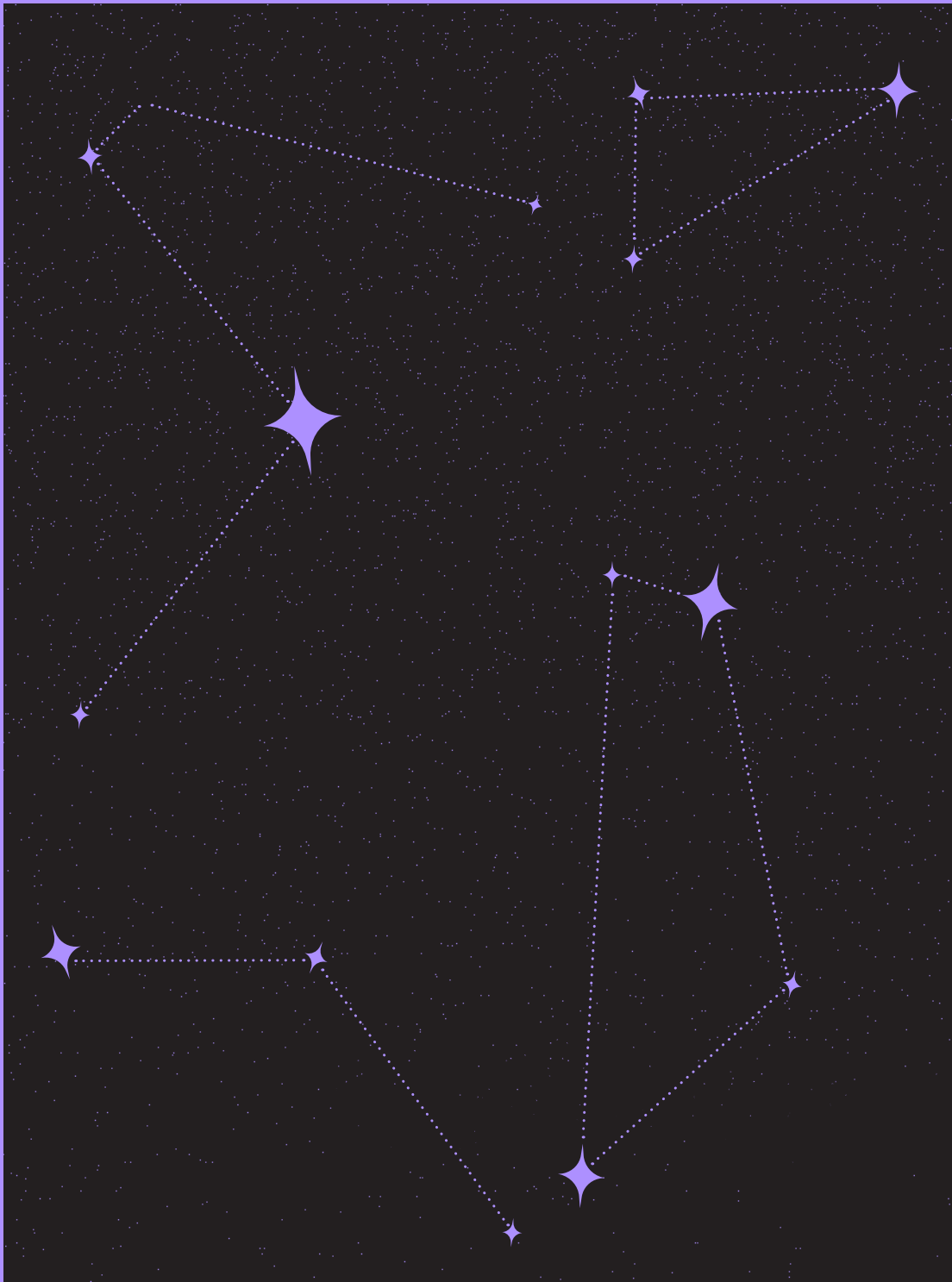
produced cheap-thrill potions and skin balms. Sadness swelled in Hecate. Her lover found their joy elsewhere. She hadn't slurped the youth out of children's souls in over six months. Her supple skin became cold and brittle, her once luscious hair aged into wiry strands of silver, her nails split and cracked from high cortisol levels, and she could no longer eat carbohydrates without forming scaly patches of psoriasis.

Crafting potions for the Ten of Cups had been a dream, but there was little left to be proud of.

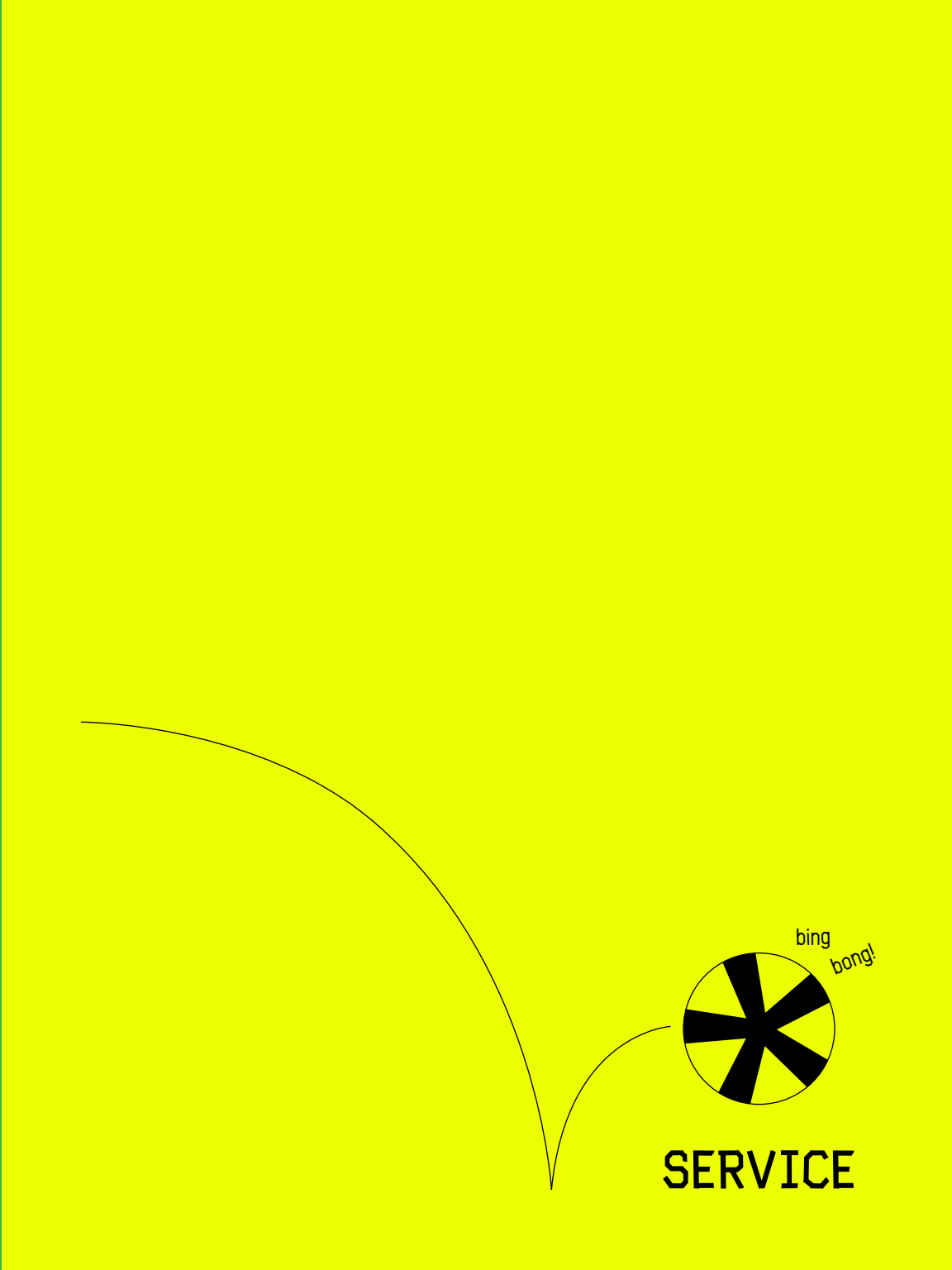
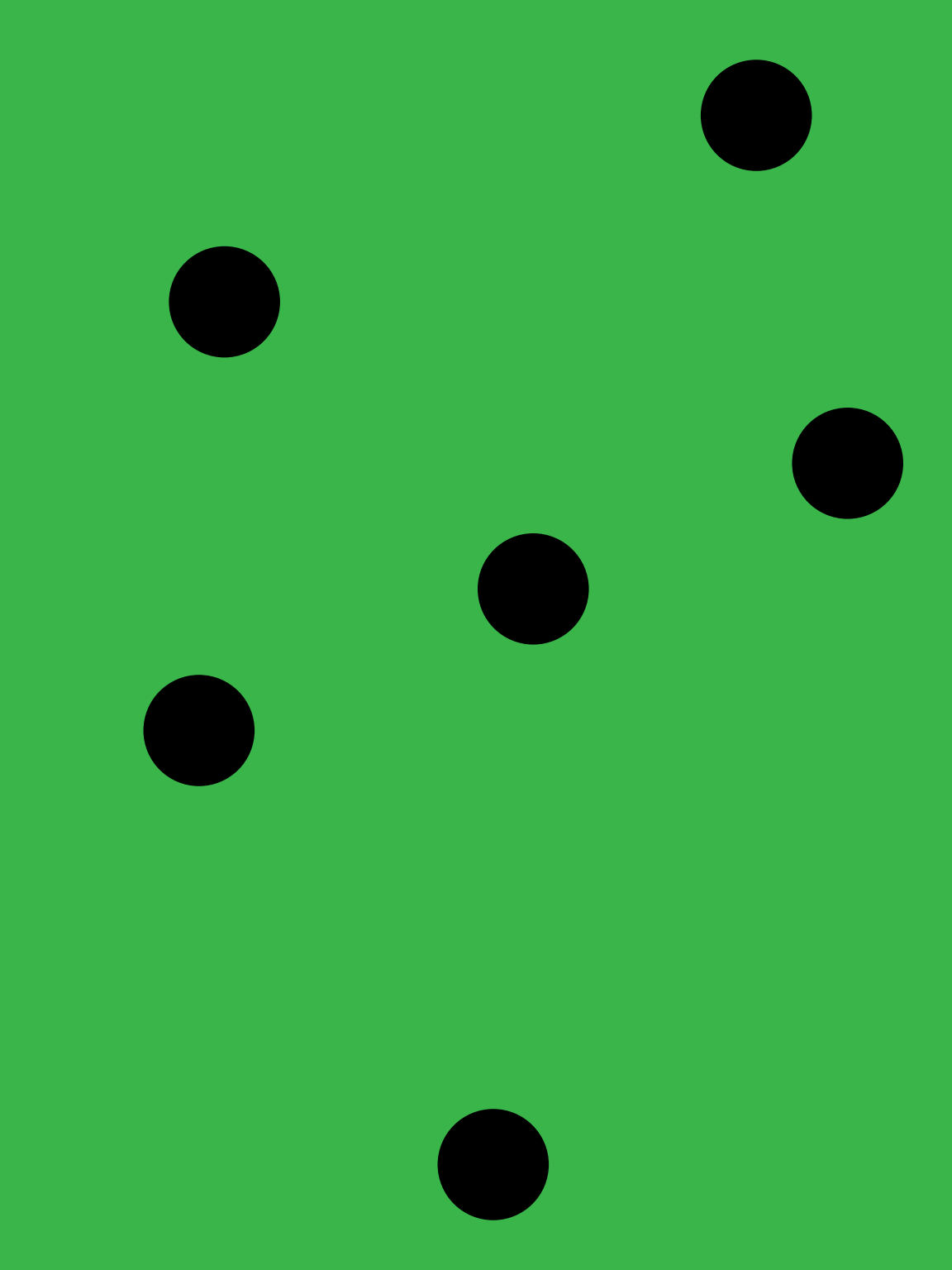
The other witches were also wasting away from the rising of the elves and the gluttonous amalgamations of once-coveted Latin spells that they generated. She had to break away, not only to save herself, but to somehow reignite the vibrant community of witches she became separated from in the darkness.



to be continued...









Leading UP

After my **third** mental breakdown in Bryant Park, I thought it might be best to go to grad school. Getting an MFA seemed like a necessary step if I wanted a sense of legitimacy and external respect from my peers. I was nervous about the possibility of stepping into the role of an educator due to certain insecurities that accumulated over the course of my "career." Who was I to teach a new generation about **gestalt, flow, and scalability** ② when I had been working in environments that prioritized data analytics and research strategies? Not being taken seriously on an intellectual level destroyed my self-confidence, not to mention the hierarchical corporate ladder that silenced my most critical opinions.

Though I deeply cared about graphic design and wanted to continue working on our relationship, I often felt betrayed by it for not being articulate enough to command the respect of a conference room **beyond how viciously perfect it looked**. Graphic design was like the hot new social media coordinator who had excellent taste in thrifted fashion. The marketing team liked to have her around, but she hadn't yet earned the broadcast of her keen and forward-thinking perspectives and was instead treated as a body who produced. Since everyone seemed to be a participant in the design process, I wanted to understand my agency in crafting culture and ensuring the same opportunity for outside voices.

I moved to New York at the end of 2012 after an eight-month stint in Stamford, Connecticut. While designing for World Wrestling Entertainment's monthly magazine, I was under the mentorship of two charismatic British expats who extended my art school education. Both were skillful designers and had a particularly strong grasp on the demands of American marketing, remaining in the tri-state area after the expansion of Dennis Publishing, ② repurposing its intellectual property to seduce a different market of the "modern man." Both of them had held prestigious rank at magazines such as *FHM* and *Maxim*, living a sort of rock star lifestyle that included partying with featured celebrities by night and finalizing multiple folds of a magazine by day. As a very impressionable twenty-one-year-old, this seemed like success.

The Brits were eventually contracted by a team led by Vince McMahon to turn *WWE Magazine* into an echo of *Maxim*, with WWE superstars as the oiled-up cover talent. By the time I arrived, WWE had cleaned up its act. Hormone supplements were replaced by clean diets and Crossfit in order to

② In his essay "Brand New Worlds," Andrew Blauvelt argues that important principles of design have since been replaced by the need to create things like mood boards to simulate the research process.

② Following the international success of *Maxim*, the publication expanded to the American market in 1997, prompting an influx of British expats in the publishing industry.





WWF block logo, 1985–1998



WWF Attitude logo, 1997–2002



WWE logo, 2014

②

In 2002, the company dropped “Federation” from name and replaced it with “Entertainment” due to a lawsuit with the World Wildlife Fund. In 2014, WWE rebranded in order to align itself with the launch of its new streaming platform, WWE Network.

④

Andrew Blauvelt and Ellen Lupton, *Graphic Design: Now in Production*. (New York: Walker Art Center, 2011).

responsibly cater to a younger demographic of fans. The Brits were starting families of their own, after all. In 2014, The scratchy Attitude-era logo from the late-'90s became a metallic mark of heraldry. ③ As the world around WWE became increasingly interconnected with the rise of social media, it became much harder to mask the troubling realities the organization created, like sex scandals, drug addictions, and problematic public decorum. My bosses urged me to move to New York to get a wider sense of the world of representation I was entering into by way of graphic design.

In the fall of 2012, The Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum presented *Graphic Design: Now in Production*, curated and edited by Andrew Blauvelt and Ellen Lupton. ④ I bought the book at an indie bookstore in Williamsburg, **an act that fulfilled me more than actually reading it.** The subject matter seemed too sophisticated for me at the time, since my current work as a graphic designer involved high-octane typography and Photoshopping muscular men with navel tattoos into infographics that looked like they belonged in video games. Practically ten years later, I'm writing this in my Williamsburg apartment, acknowledging and understanding the book's expansive content, marking a decade of learning many of its observations and projections firsthand—albeit in a scappier fashion. *Graphic Design: Now in Production* is about the then-current state and future of graphic design, featuring the contributions of many experts in the field. It covers a range of topics like emerging technology's effect on graphic design, the shape-shifting role of a graphic designer, and the relational impact that graphic design has on society. Though much has changed and evolved from then to now, its relevance endures by cataloging how we ended up in a place where we must make sense of our abundance.

My Italian great-aunts taught me how to be a graphic designer. Standing at small-but-sturdy statures of 4' 10", the three women—including my grandmother—were spitfires who knew how to hold their ground. They accepted the ways of others but muttered their differences beneath their breath. Though practically identical physically, there were wonderful differences among them as they shaped their own ways from their shared upbringing. I often spent Friday nights with them while my parents took time for themselves. As they sat around the table gossiping over desserts and coffee, I watched the TGIF programming block on ABC, a staple for many young kids growing up in the '90s. I spent my time volleying back and forth from the living room to the kitchen during commercial breaks. Anna Vittuli was a regular guest who always gifted me **Neapolitan ice cream sandwiches**. There were also pizzelle or biscotti that needed eating and whose texture paired exceedingly well with the smell of steaming espresso from the stainless steel coffee pot. After the ladies finished up in the kitchen, they made a point to join me in my space to watch *Boy Meets World* or *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*. If I had a new CD, they would become my best audience as I performed the hit singles from acts like Britney Spears or 98°. ^⑤ The aunts were my biggest fans.

Such easy acceptance can be hard to come by, especially for a person whose job relies on feedback and criticism. I never expected them to understand what success looked like for me; exploring and following my interests was enough. After WWE, I tried to model a graphic design practice after the ways in which my aunts sustained community: by using time and experience as key ingredients—especially since social media was my new medium for **fostering connections** with others. As an in-house designer and art director at HBO, cooking up solutions



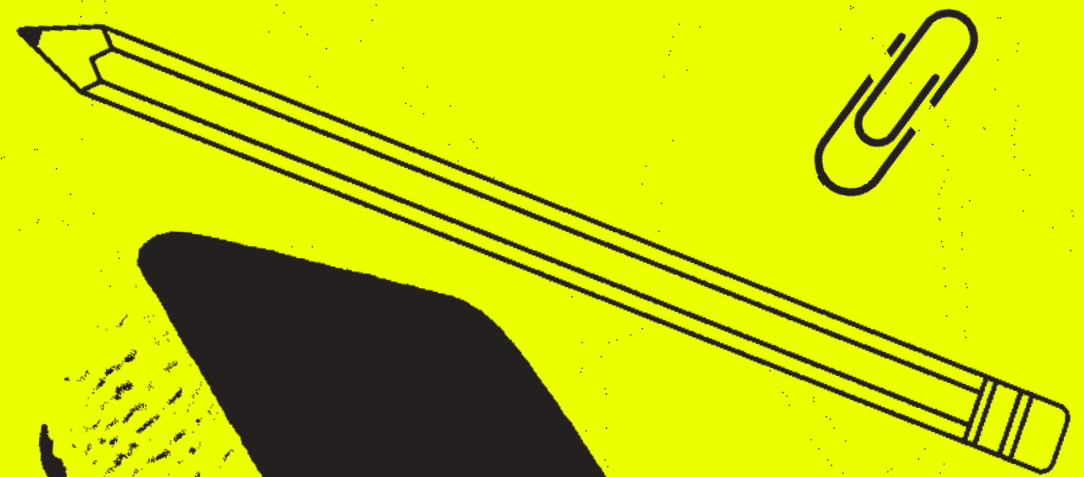
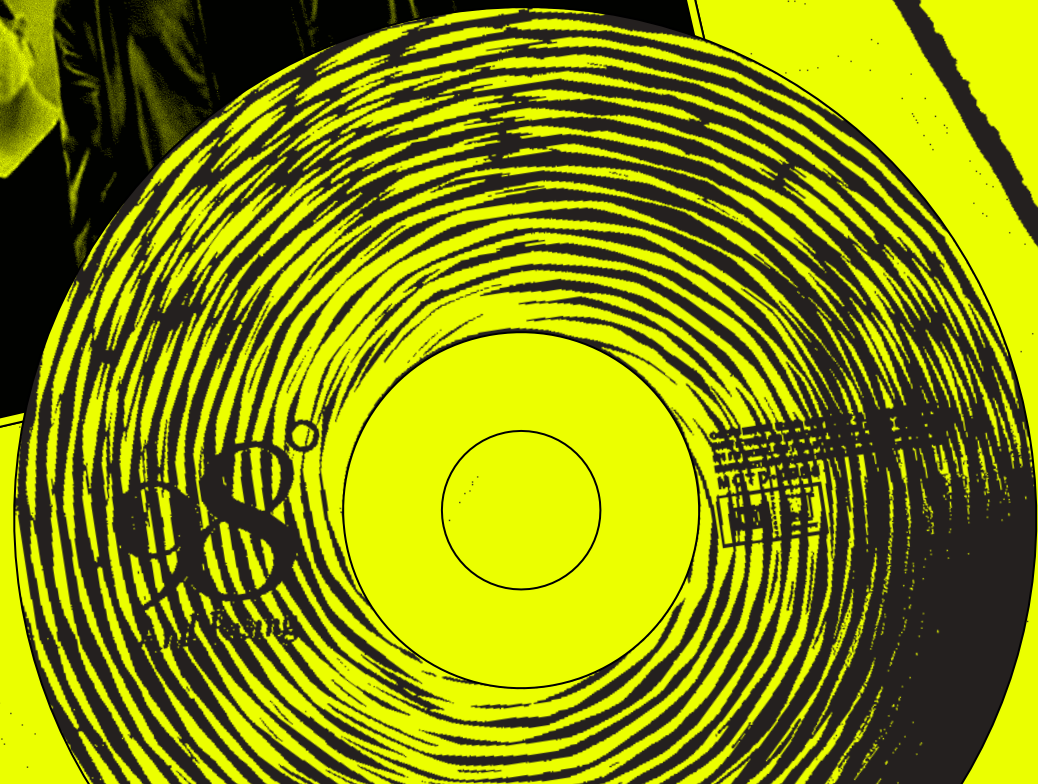
Turn the page to see the album design for 98° *And Rising*.

I tried to model a graphic design practice after the ways in which my aunts sustained community: by using time and experience as key ingredients.

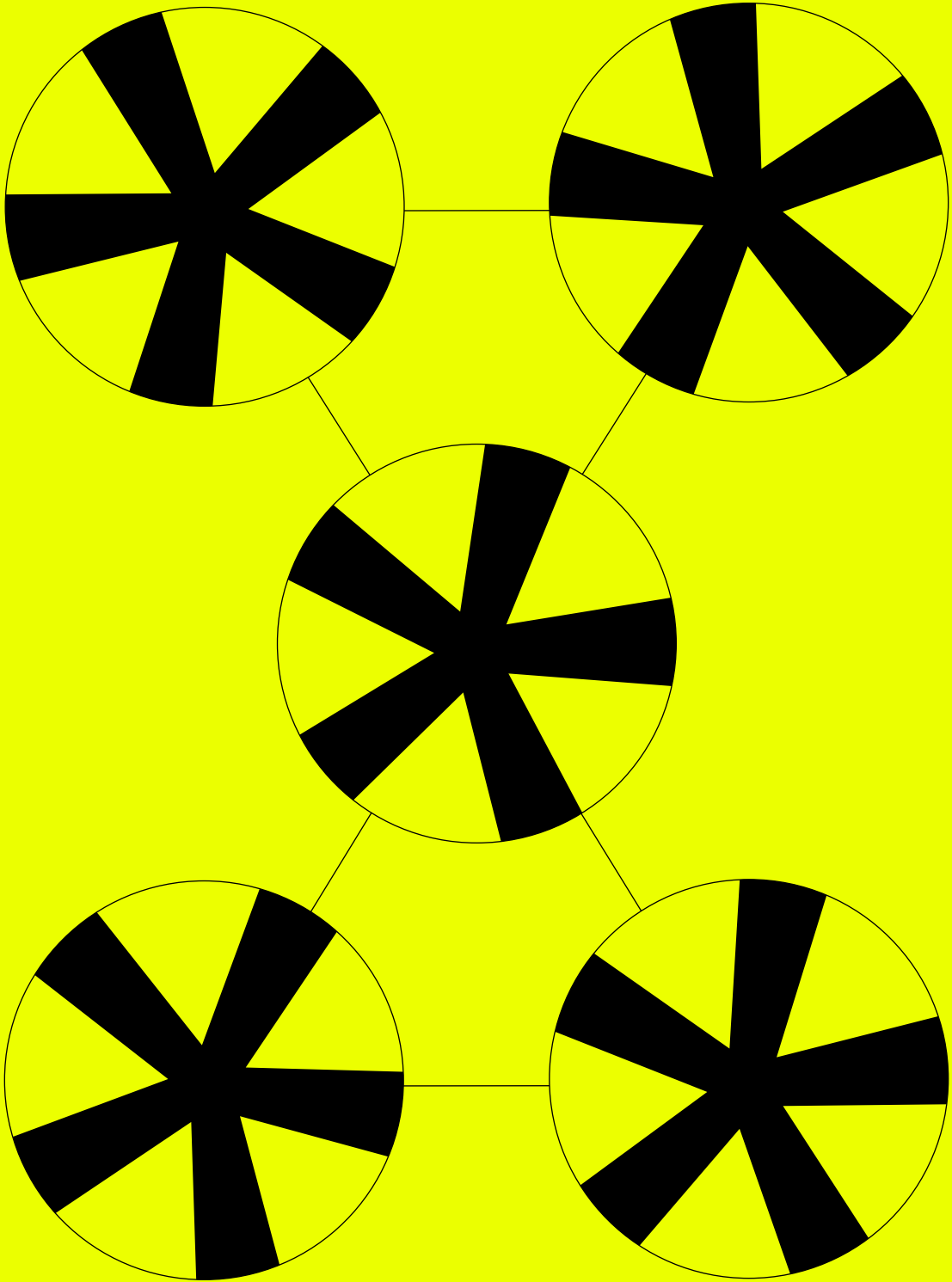
for stakeholders meant understanding the cultural experiences of target audiences and meeting them where they were. Much of this new learning was supplemented by reports from marketing and data analytics teams, as I was ultimately tasked with developing aesthetics that represented the audience and the story we were selling to them.



98° And Rising album design.
October 20, 1998



Neopolitan ice cream bar



Passing the Ball

⑥
Dmitri Siegel,
“Designing Our Own
Graves,” *Design
Observer*, August
8, 2006, [https://
designobserver.
com/feature/
designing-our-
own-graves/4307](https://designobserver.com/feature/designing-our-own-graves/4307).

②
**Marshall McLuhan
and Barrington
Nevitt, *Take Today:
The Executive as
Dropout* (New York:
Harcourt Brace
Jovanovich, 1972).**

Digging into the past of design criticism, I came across Dmitri Siegel's article "Designing Our Own Graves." ⑥ Originally posted on *Design Observer* in 2006, it was also included in *Graphic Design: Now in Production*. Siegel adopts the term "prosumer" to describe the current state of consumers becoming active producers of the things they want to put out into the world. This can be seen as a reference to Marshall McLuhan and Barrington Nevitt's suggestion, in their 1972 book *Take Today*, that "with electric technology, the consumer would become a producer." ② After the rise of desktop publishing, designers were faced with the dawn of a new era that democratized their expertise even further through design-it-yourself websites, online generators, and a plethora of software services that granted practical outputs for creative ideas. Today, such publishing platforms have since become politicized as each person bears the freedom of self-publishing and production. By existing within a user-generated visual culture, **graphic designers are challenged to take on an expanded practice that considers history and its plurality of voices.** In the comments section of the post, Marian Bantjes writes:

... prosumerism -great word, by the way- is perhaps taking back control of as much individuality as people can in their struggle to not be managed in every minute aspect of their lives. I would much rather enter the space of someone who had made or controlled their own environment in whatever way represented who they are, than one which had been "designed" by a professional to the prevailing notion of "taste." Ultimately self-expression will find an out.

If the role of a graphic designer was one that refined culture to a permissible hegemony, we are now finding ways to puncture these systems in order for other critical voices to be seen and heard.

⑧

During his talk at the *Deem Journal's* recent symposium, "Designing for Dignity," Ramon Tejada shared his definition of puncturing:

"Puncturing creates gaps, spaces, and holes for the local, the ethnic, the non-Anglo/Western/European to take space. It creates possibilities and fosters pluralistic imaginations."

⑨

Are.na was created by a team of designers and developers led by Charles Broskoski and Chris Sherron in 2011.

⑩

cyberfeminismindex.com.

If the role of a graphic designer was one that refined culture to a **permissible** hegemony, we are now finding ways to puncture these systems ⑧ in order for other critical voices to be seen and heard. At least, this is what I see when I scroll my feed each night, admiring various visual outputs, vertical videos, or carousel curations that represent the way people are thinking and sharing these days. Further down in the comments section of Siegel's post, Ellen Lupton reflects on the change starting to affect the field of graphic design in response to new, open platforms. Looking toward the future, she says, "Let's stop viewing ourselves as a protected community in charge of its own destiny. Let's join the world instead." As a middle schooler who spent evenings helping the popular girls in school get the most out of a CSS style sheet on Myspace, it was more fun—and much more advantageous—to **help people hack new tools** and share resources rather than possess them. We can be available to each other to lend a neighborly hand, but there must be an intentional effort in how often we interact and how exchange knowledge.

Designers drift among the many as we **draw constellations** between histories and educate others with the knowledge we accumulate. In my first semester at VCFA, one of the first pieces of design writing that I dove into was Mindy Seu's essay "On Gathering." I had already been privy to sites like Are.na—started by RISD alumna who sought to share design thinking more widely among their network. ⑨ On Are.na, Seu's *Cyberfeminism Index* was referenced often, becoming a research tool for anyone who sought out techno-critical works, while actively becoming a poetic art piece in and of itself. ⑩ "On Gathering" summarizes the kind of designer Seu is: "When I call myself a gatherer, I mean that, even without my hands in dirt, I aggregate, together

with collaborators, disparate pieces from an ecosystem, and develop the appropriate container for each collection." ²² The Cyberfeminism Index is a great representation of a DIWO initiative ²³ and part of a larger ongoing movement of **open-source exchange**. Alongside it, alternative approaches to design education have been established as online learning communities. Here are a few resources that have supported my own research:

BIPOC Design History revisits and rewrites the course of design history in a way that centers previously marginalized designers, cultural figures, and particularly BIPOC and QTPOC people. <https://bipocdesignhistory.com/>

Futuress is both a learning community and a publishing platform that develops formats committed to decolonizing and depatriarchalizing design education. Design is never neutral; it is always political. It can either suppress and oppress or, in their vision, be a tool for collective resistance and liberation. <https://futuress.org/>

Critical Coding Cookbook is a collection of alternative histories, narratives, and approaches to computation. This volume of material can serve as an open-source educational resource across a spectrum of learning communities. <https://criticalcode.recipes/>

I had spent most of career as an in-house designer crafting marketing campaigns for HBO. Furthering my education made me attracted to the idea of essentially **demystifying everything** that my privileges in an office cubicle bestowed upon me, especially as I was pressured to manage younger designers and impose my "refined" tastes on them. I wondered

²²

Mindy Seu,
"On Gathering,"
Shift Space, 2020.

²³

A DIWO (Do It With Others) initiative is a collaborative approach to creating, designing, or problem-solving that emphasizes the importance of working together and sharing knowledge and resources.

what it would be like if this environment turned into a place where we approached our collective knowledge in a more equitable way by celebrating and encouraging our differences. I was tired of constantly wanting to be accepted by the "cool kids" at work, which was essentially the entire marketing team. I was especially tired of hearing the term "imposter syndrome" being overused in my circles, because it seemed to be a way to validate people's insecurities of never being able to stand out or be taken seriously for acting as their unique selves. If I wanted to reclaim my own confidence as a passionate designer and maker, then perhaps **I needed to find ways to grow out of a system of constraint.**

If you build it, they will come.

It was a warm spring day in 2003, and my dad got a couple of my teammates and me to the field a bit too early for practice. While Dad set up the field for practice, the three of us ventured into the woods along the river, following the tire tracks that ran into the green from the parking lot. An abandoned car sat tipped into the mud with its windows bashed in. Excited by our discovery, we looked for clues as to who may have done it, only finding a jewel case of a bootlegged DMX CD strewn along the side with condom wrappers and the remains of mango-flavored blunt wraps. Toward the end of practice, another car whirled around the field before some kids got out and started further smashing those windows in. Such was the practice environment we came to embrace.

Disappointed with the gatekeeping nature of premier league play for the under-fourteen age group, my dad set out to create a new soccer team to compete against the more elite clubs.

Playing Premier as a kid often meant you came from a certain economic background that afforded the privileges of better coaching, leading to a better chance at making varsity at a competitive, Division 1 athletics high school whose intensive sports programs improved your chances for a college scholarship and beyond. For parents whose children were gifted athletes, such a system could breed success and an opportunity to better afford higher education. My parents were no different in wanting these things for me, however my mom often challenged the concept behind leagues that required young athletes to “already be good” in order to gain coveted positions.

Both of my parents worked full-time to provide my brother and me with a healthy, middle-class lifestyle. I was able to participate in oil painting classes, horseback riding, and the aforementioned soccer clubs. I practiced weekly with the Olympic Development Program and twice a week with the Rhode Island Stingrays, a statewide soccer club that mimicked European prestige. Being here meant I had the tools needed to make the starting line-up, **though the grueling demands required an increased work ethic.** Eventually, my dad got laid off from work, and my hobbies took first cut. Soccer was salvaged, though I had often been relegated to the bench even after working tirelessly at practice. Below the surface, my father’s ongoing discontent was simmering as I steadily lost confidence in my athletic abilities due to my perceived rank. Angered by how my coach sanctioned playtime among the young girls by limiting many from the experience of competitive play, Dad was determined to challenge such unnecessary injustices by becoming **a better and more equitable coach.**

In a recent article from *The New Yorker* called “Why Everyone Feels Like They’re Faking It,”²³ Leslie Jamison reports on the

23

Leslie Jamison, “Why Everyone Feels Like They’re Faking It,” *The New Yorker*, February 1, 2022.

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Pauline R. Clance and Suzanne Ament Imes, “The impostor phenomenon in high achieving women: Dynamics and therapeutic intervention.” *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research & Practice* 15, no. 3, 1978.

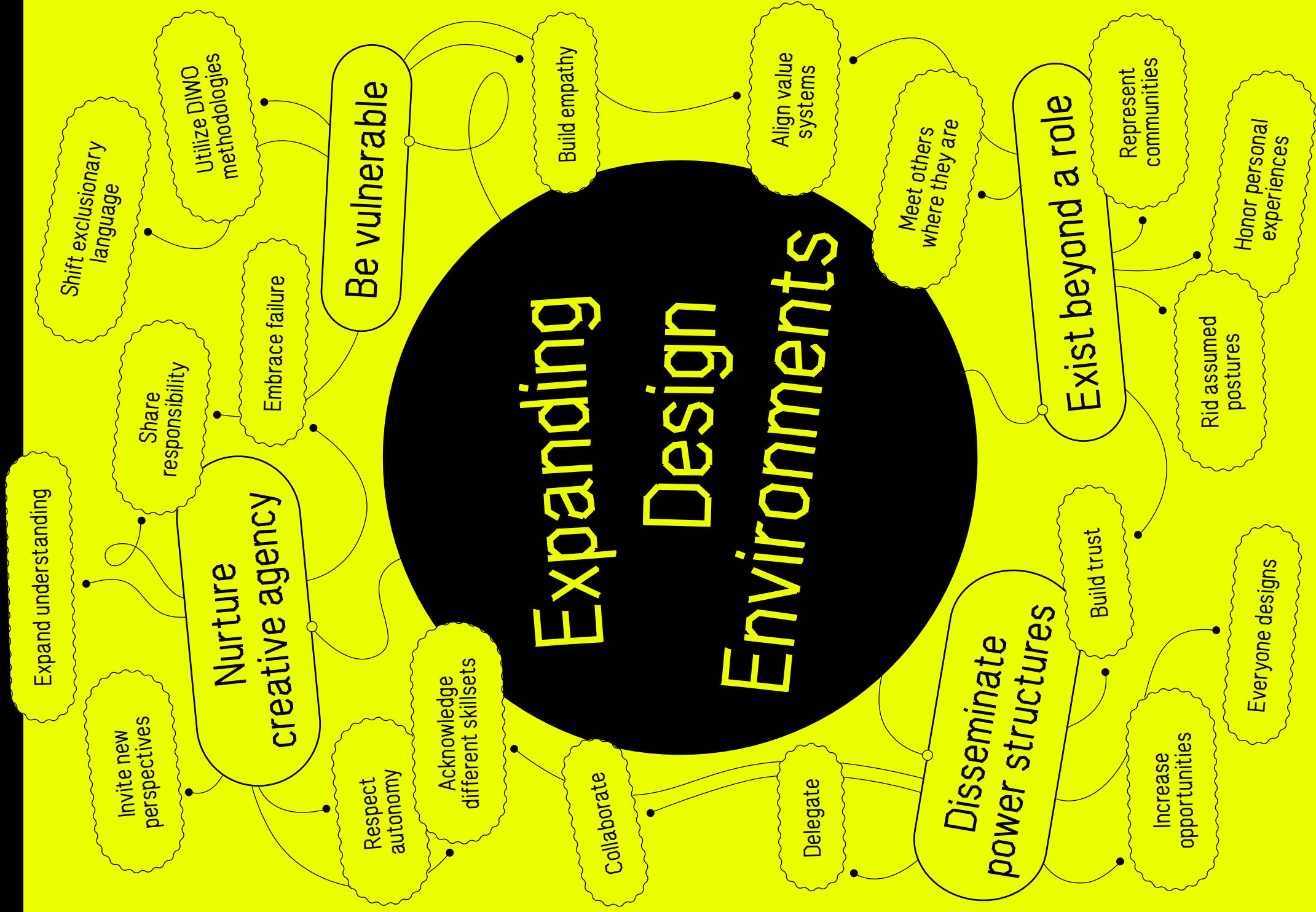
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Ruchika Tulshyan and Jodi-Ann Burey, “Stop Telling Women They Have Imposter Syndrome,” *Harvard Business Review*, February 11, 2021.

ubiquitous term of imposter syndrome, the women who coined it, and the women who challenge it. It originated from a paper called “The Impostor Phenomenon in High Achieving Women: Dynamics and Therapeutic Intervention,” in which Pauline Clance and Suzanne Imes collect many experiences of women—who are predominately white—that identify with experiences of intellectual phoniness or living in perpetual fear of being “found out” due to being part of a system that fails to support them.²⁴ This phenomenon is something that I have heard many designers speak to when feeling like who they are and what they do are not enough in the environments they contribute to, regardless of their race or gender. It’s a feeling I have fought off through internal protest when my needs were not met or even considered, **despite my ability to be heard.**

Jamison then interviews Ruchika Tulshyan and Jodi-Ann Burey who collaborated on the 2020 article “Stop Telling Women They Have Imposter Syndrome” in *Harvard Business Review*.²⁵ Being women of color (Tulshyan is Indian Singaporean and Burey is Jamaican), they feel imposter syndrome directs our view toward fixing women at work instead of fixing the places where women work. Jamison describes part of her conversation with Burey:

Burey, who was born in Jamaica, didn’t feel like an impostor; she felt enraged by the systems that had been built to disenfranchise her. She also didn’t experience any yearning to belong, to inhabit certain spaces of power. “White women want to access power, they want to sit at the table,” she told me. “Black women say, ‘This table is rotten, this table is hurting everyone.’” She resisted knee-jerk empowerment rhetoric that seemed to encourage a damaging bravado: “I didn’t want to beef up myself to inflict more harm.”



I've often felt pressure to join the ranks of **harmful power structures** in order to gain greater influence in work environments. Challenging those structures became a financial risk. To me, it seemed everyone could design but needed guidance, support, and encouragement to do it well. As a soccer-playing kid, I had witnessed how my dad created a new, tangible reality for me, so I understood how to create my environments that brought the outside in. I drafted plans for how to **nurture better design practices** among a team and its collaborators by creating diagrams and operational proposals and shamelessly putting them into practice. 🕒 In a tumultuous time when folks were challenging their workplaces, this was an opportunity to unearth my ideas, share them with others, and rework things according to their critical feedback.

Despite our own economic hardship, my dad pulled me from the elite club along with another girl and partnered up with two longtime coaches in Providence and Central Falls to create their own Premier team. Made up of diverse immigrant heritages across the three different townships, **our team was fierce and willing to improve**, but we desperately needed to learn how to play well with each other. In our first few games, we wore mismatching navy blue cotton shirts, black shorts, and white socks, often looking as disheveled as we felt compared to the sparkly brand-name kits worn by the clans of blonde pre-teens we were usually up against. Eventually, the dads funded a full team kit—including warm-ups and bags—from a janky soccer warehouse site called scoresports.com. Not acknowledging this generosity at my age, I only remember being disappointed that we weren't wearing Adidas. This was easily placated by being allowed to design the kit with my teammates. Dressing up as a winning team improved our morale, though **it didn't necessarily help us win.**

🕒

See page 23 and pages 33-35 for design team proposals.

🕒

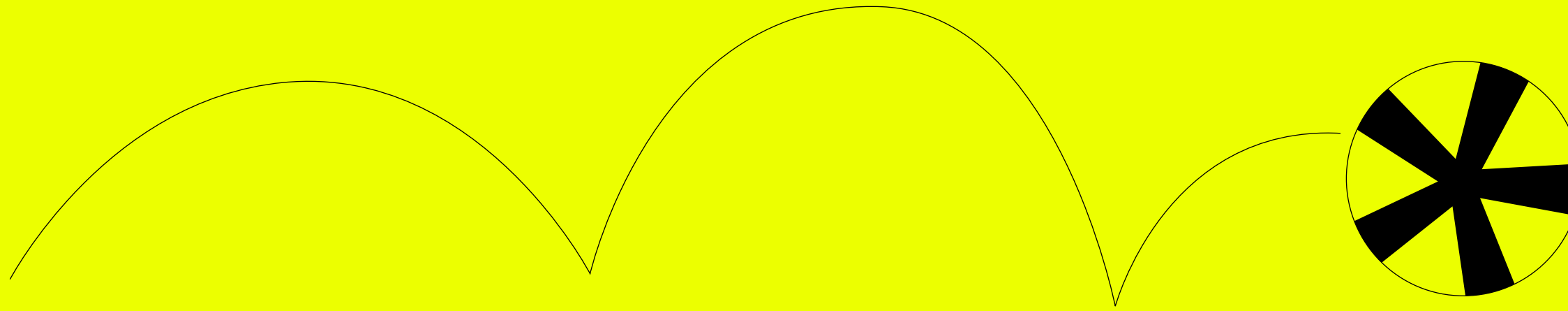
Total Football is a Dutch tactical concept from the 1960s that allows a soccer team to maintain possession of the field. Its key principle is that no player should have a fixed position, demanding spatial awareness and teamwork. In current pop culture, it has become an ongoing theme in the TV show, Ted Lasso.

🕒

Chevrolet Suburbans are large SUVs within the category of quintessential American soccer-mom cars, a level up from a minivan. Parents who drove Suburbans were often seen as upper middle class since the vehicle is terrible on gas and can hold many.

Access and fairness and guided my father as he stewed over tactics to help us be better, standing by his values of providing equal play time. Winning became a strategy of putting players in positions where they could thrive. A slow runner who bounced between positions was moved to defense after my dad acknowledged her insane ability to throw-in balls half the length of the field. As an angry defender who wanted to be everywhere the ball was, I was placed in midfield despite my tears and stubbornness, allowing me to exert my energy. Our star player moved to an attacking midfielder position, which allowed us to dominate the opposing team's side of the field rather than having her wait by the net for a pass. **Small changes, regardless of minor discomforts, made us work more effectively and score goals.** Special care with willing participants was all it took to survive a season, help kids get access to competitive play, and envision paths as skillful high school athletes and thinkers.

Not many accolades were paid to my dad and the other coaches for their acts of service. It was their faith that helped us change the course of our futures, along with encouraging **fluid formations** from studying sport. 🕒 Later in the season, we arrived at the field for a home game against a team from a nicer part of Rhode Island, finding a puddle of tar from a car that was set on fire the night before. Always early, my dad quickly grabbed the liquid chalk and began relining the field further down the green. As our shocked opponents arrived in their carpool Suburbans, 🕒 we galloped around the steaming puddle of tar in our scoresports.com kits, warmed up, and got ready to take our place in the league semifinals.



Do Ic Witen
Others

Expanding the playing field

In the kitchen together, the aunts would dispute recipes by raising their voices over the exact amount of garlic to help a sauce reach its optimal potential. Pride was on full display, though each woman would secretly try out each other's recipes to evolve their own. If there was any hierarchy among them, it was only determined by who had the greatest **personal experience** with a specific dish, which at times could be contentious. Being in the kitchen with a handful of spunky Italian women is a lively endeavor. My clearest memory is a day when I joined them as they cooked together in the cellar of the two-family home they grew up in. Vaporized frying oil filled the room, the best kind of sealant for mid-century wooden cabinetry. Framed photos of Pope John Paul II and John F. Kennedy hung on the wall behind them as they argued over how big to make the doughboys. An assembly line of sorts, my grandmother Anna shaped the balls of dough into flat discs, Auntie Carrie carefully tossed them in frying oil until they reached a perfect golden brown, and Auntie Etta patted off the excess oil and cooled them on a rack until she was able to give them a generous coating of powdered sugar while keeping a watchful eye on me. Delighted to have me there, I was given a helping of dough which I molded into shapes resembling people, animals, and flowers. In my own home, my mother followed similar traditions, often noting that **you should never cook alone**. I do not like to design alone, which is probably why I've since left my previous two jobs as work became remote with the rise of a "new normal."

The pandemic impacted my habits dramatically. I lost my entire schedule and the structure of how I had lived my life, both in routine and in my sense of place. In parallel, **there seemed to be a collective upheaval** of all the systems that were



As a way to exert my energy during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, I took to Instagram, like many others, to share my personal recipes and ways to cope with imminent change.



not made for many of the people who inhabited them. I became aware of the stress I had put on myself and my practice when I treated graphic design as a short-term solution to other people's problems. As cultural exchange became more accessible through a rich period of interconnectedness online, I too realized I could finally act on the things I cared about the most. The weekly recipes that I shared on my social profile 📷 eventually morphed into moments of turning inward to my collection of memories and all the times I wished to give form to rejected ideas. I was determined to source community, not only to improve my mental state, but to show how a graphic design practice could further enrich our approach to

workplace environments. In many ways, the pandemic was a revolution of selfhood. It empowered me to go back to school in order to be **more equipped** to be a better team captain, to open my eyes and ears to those around me, and to acknowledge where they were coming from.

For me, being around people is the best way to gain new knowledge, leading me to prioritize collaboration. Before I left HBO, corporate work became increasingly taxing as our design team was utilized less and less for creative solutions. Most of our work, which was assigned by the budget-holding marketing department, was being passed off to large creative agencies who synthesized the **obvious stylistic tropes** for the intended markets on expedited project timelines. To stake a claim in larger initiatives, not only did you need a team of expert designers devoted to a single project, but it had to be a team that specialized in marketing acronyms, motion graphics, and emerging tech like AR and VR, bearing a fearless leader who could flawlessly execute a live pitch to executives to sell an experience while taking on six other projects with a similar scope at the same time. Though we had all of these necessary skills, the design department was seemingly unauthorized to disrupt the flow of new business tactics. Instead, our day-to-day became filled with refining Google Slides marketing presentations and compiling shared documents of design systems for outside agencies. Our interaction with each other across remote locations diminished under a **lack of agency and low morale** during the height of stay-at-home orders.

I proposed the planning of casual meetups to the design leadership team based on “homerooms” from the VCFA MFA in Design Remote Residency. Since we were using the Google Workspace so often for work, I wanted to use the tools to act as a **resource for leisure** instead. A shared spreadsheet



An illustration I created with Google Sheets, a distracting productivity tool, which I like to use for leisurely making. This sparked an idea for a team workshop later.

docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1CB3nufkq6Rkpa8kc6x15i0w-A0EM4_LlLbKpC1qQ93ll/edit#gid=0

ID Homeroom Hangouts

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100% 123 DM Sans 9 B I U A

A11 I miss the meditation sessions, ng!! Casual one somehow for a hang?

Homeroom Hangouts

Bi-weekly, open chat rooms or huddles usually co-hosted by two managers. Designed to increase camaraderie and collaboration within our team, each Homeroom Hangout can follow a theme for discussion chosen by the hosts, or be a free space to connect and chat. Camera/mic optional.

Date	Time	Hosts	Theme	Zoom Link
Tuesday, October 26	@ 3PM	Max and Winnie	Halloween Hang Eat candy and listen to tunes.	Zoom Link Here Meeting ID: 622 686 1374 Passcode: fa2021
Tuesday, November 9	@ 3PM	Kyls and Tom	Free Hang A space to chat and work. Room will stay open for an hour.	
Tuesday, November 23	@ 3PM	Person Name and Person Name	Listening Party A DJ will play some music. Requests can be sent via Zoom chat	Zoom Link Here Meeting ID: 600 Passcode: f
Tuesday, December 7	@ 3PM	Linda and Person Name	Plant Parents Come hang and discuss how to be a good plant parent... or not!	Zoom Link Meeting ID: Passcode: f
Tuesday, December 21	@ 3PM	Person Name and Person Name	Guided Meditation An hour to disconnect in a comfortable space. Audio only.	
Tuesday, January 4	@ 3PM	Person Name and Person Name		

DRINKS, Pictionary, Breakout rooms, Bingo, DJ

Location can also be a "huddle" in a slack channel

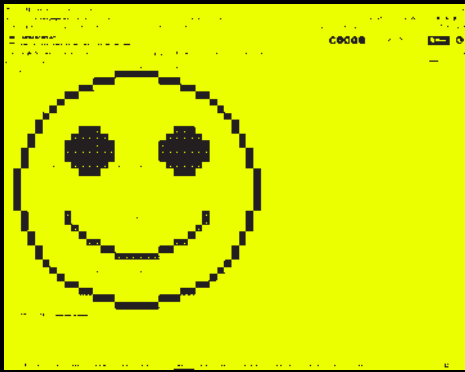
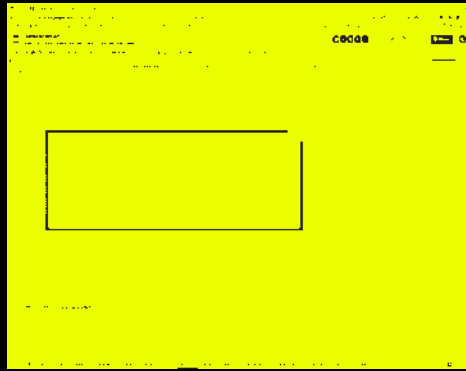
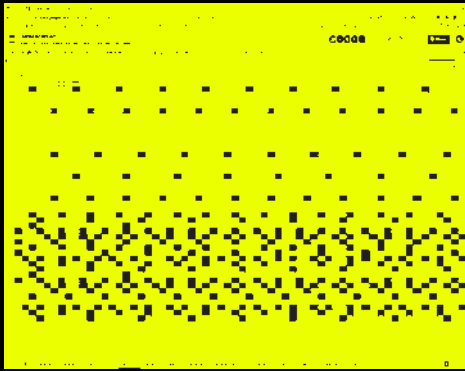
I miss the meditation sessions, ng!! Casual one somehow for a hang?

Sheet1

During a time of remote work and lack of personal interfacing, ID Homeroom Hangouts was created to encourage free time. Inspired by VCFA MFA in Design's Remote Residencies, team members were invited to lead biweekly sessions and continue to design its formatting as we made more creative use out of SaaS tools.

MINI
WORK-
SHOP!

NOVEMBER 9, 2021 AT 3PM EST ON ZOOM



Spreadsheet designs created
by my team members.



Sorry not sorry,
Google.



Ellen Lupton,
"Reputations:
Sheila Levrant de
Bretteville," *Eye
Magazine* 18, no. 70,
2008.

became our dashboard for "Homeroom Hangouts." I invited team members to sign up to host sessions or contribute to developing the series together. We started with a virtual Halloween party. I hosted the second hangout, where I introduced the idea of a DIWO workshop. In it, we made spreadsheet art, which was my interpretation of a variable type workshop I had read about from the 2020 Typographics festival mixed with my goal of using tools in ways that were not intended. 🙌 The turnout was good. Not only did we have the freedom to make what we wanted, but there was also the option to not make anything at all, or even be online for that matter. Hangouts were strictly optional, allowing for teammates to **respectfully opt-out** and take time for themselves for as long as they weren't working.

By talking privately with each team member, I learned that they each craved more time to get to know each other through continued collaboration and spirited discussions. The hosted events also offered folks the opportunity to build upon new skills and interests with the support of an encouraging sounding board. Such a practice influenced mutual respect across other teams as designers gained more confidence in being willing facilitators who possessed a specific level of needed expertise. In the words of Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, they became more aware and critical of their tools and abilities:

The choice of which format to communicate in should occur after you know whom you want to talk to, and what you want to tell them. This plays into our notion of proactivity, which is to go out into the community with issues that have meaning for you, find out who else is affected by these issues, what organizations already exist, what they are already doing, what needs have not been met and then look for what ways graphic design could communicate to those audiences who don't have access to the information that's out there for them. 🙌

After starting at VCFA, I wondered if a person-centered approach to managing was even possible in a corporate setting. After weeks of required training, it seemed like it was an idealized way to manage a working community for as long as work was completed and systems were followed. On a personal level, I had been battling my new leadership over the perceived limitations set before me by my department that inhibited my expansive thinking. There were many invisible lines that I could not cross or spaces I was “protected” from entering, which led me to further dismantle what our hierarchy even was. After leaving, the Hangouts continued, though I had hoped it would lead to a greater reckoning. A lot of people felt similarly to me, opting for their free time en masse, later deemed “The Great Resignation.” 🌀

Leaps of faith

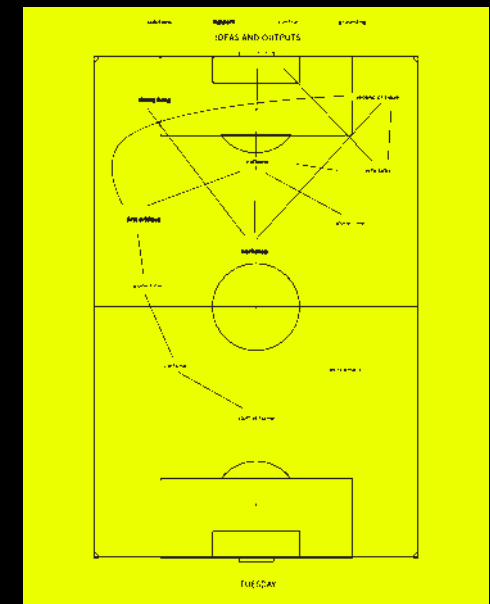
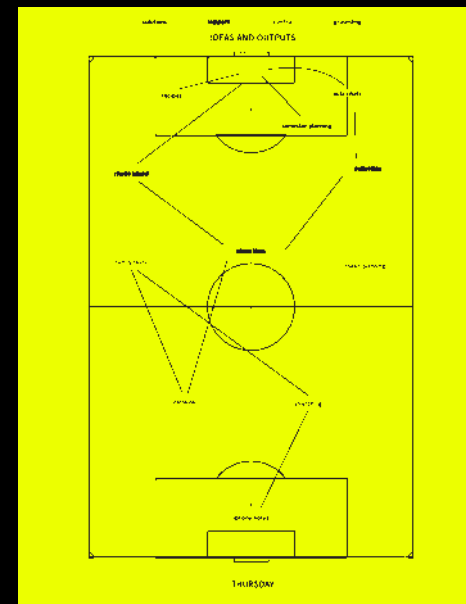
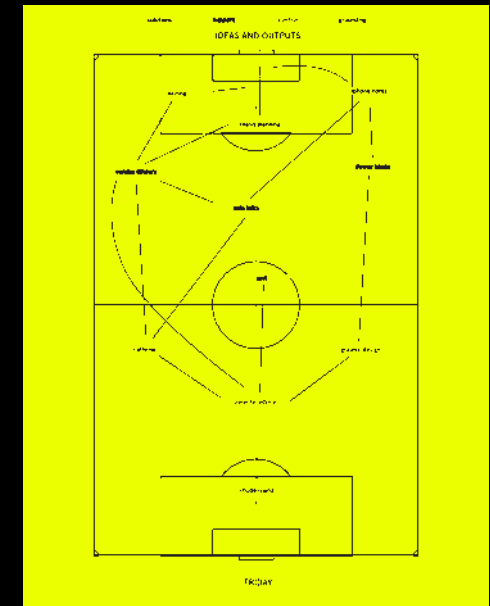
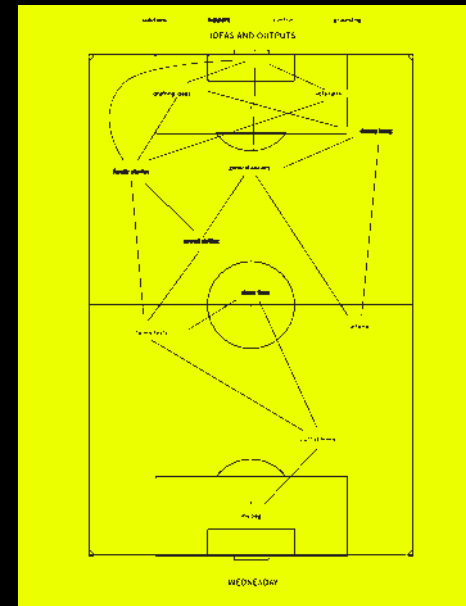
In 1971, artist Gordon Matta-Clark created the art project and restaurant FOOD in response to the changing cultural and social landscape of New York City. The unconventional menu—like a meal centered around the presentation of bones—and its place within a previously abandoned building challenged the prevailing norms of the time by exercising alternative possibilities under the guise of art. 🌀 Today, we lack certain freedom to explore relational thinking due to the persistent demands of practicality, though expanding the places and constraints we work within could be a solution. Rather than inhabiting a dysfunctional present that places a constant focus on future commercial placements, we can exercise the ability to place ourselves in unfamiliar situations to **synthesize perspectives in complicated ways** and return to practicality with different outlooks than we once had.



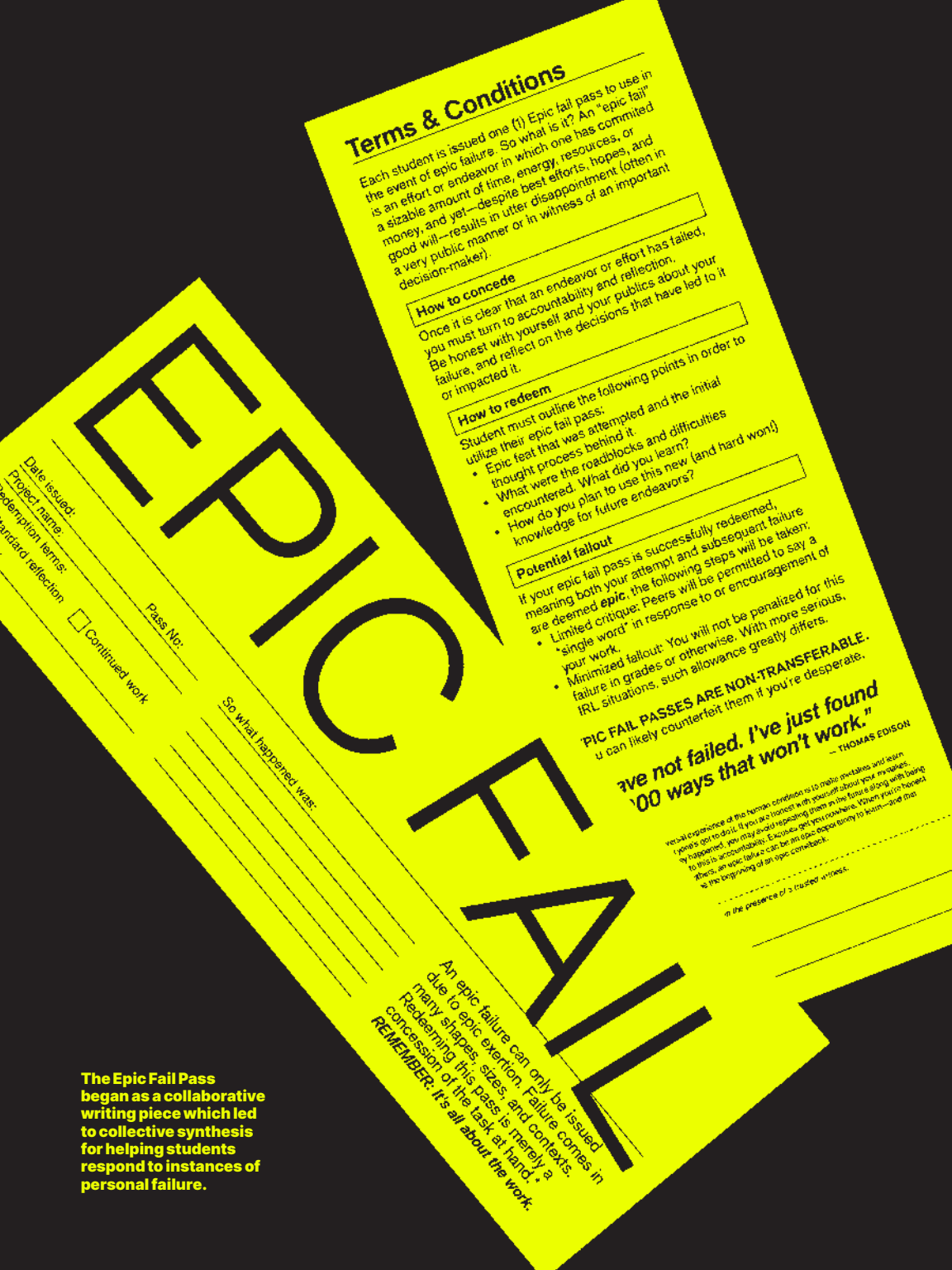
“The Great Resignation” is a term that was popularized in 2021 to describe the trend of large numbers of workers leaving their jobs in response to the pandemic, primarily due to burnout, a desire for better work-life balance, and the availability of remote work options.



Markus Müller, “FOOD” by Gordon Matta-Clark: Public Interventions in Urban Space (Zurich: Lars Müller Publishers, 2008).



My weekly documentation from the Spring 2022 VCFA MFA in Design Residency utilized soccer fields to serve as existing structures for information.



Terms & Conditions

Each student is issued one (!) Epic fail pass to use in the event of epic failure. So what is it? An "epic fail" is an effort or endeavor in which one has committed a sizable amount of time, energy, resources, or money, and yet—despite best efforts, hopes, or good will—results in utter disappointment (often in a very public manner or in witness of an important decision-maker).

How to concede

Once it is clear that an endeavor or effort has failed, you must turn to accountability and reflection. Be honest with yourself and your publics about your failure, and reflect on the decisions that have led to it or impacted it.

How to redeem

Student must outline the following points in order to utilize their epic fail pass:

- Epic feat that was attempted and the initial thought process behind it
- What were the roadblocks and difficulties encountered. What did you learn?
- How do you plan to use this new (and hard won!) knowledge for future endeavors?

Potential fallout

If your epic fail pass is successfully redeemed, meaning both your attempt and subsequent failure are deemed **epic**, the following steps will be taken:

- Limited critique: Peers will be permitted to say a "single word" in response to or encouragement of your work.
- Minimized fallout: You will not be penalized for this failure in grades or otherwise. With more serious, IRL situations, such allowance greatly differs.

PIC FAIL PASSES ARE NON-TRANSFERABLE. You can likely counterfeit them if you're desperate.

"I've not failed. I've just found 100 ways that won't work."

— THOMAS EDISON

Personal experience of the former contributor to make mistakes and learn (none's got to do it). If you are honest with yourself about your mistakes, by happened, you may avoid repeating them in the future along with being to this is accountability. Excuses get you nowhere. When your honest others, an epic failure can be an epic opportunity to learn—and that is the beginning of an epic comeback.

in the presence of a trusted witness.

An epic failure can only be issued due to epic exertion. Failure comes in many shapes, sizes, and contexts. Redeeming this pass is merely a concession of the task at hand. **REMEMBER: It's all about the work.**

Date issued: _____
 Project name: _____
 Redemption terms: _____
 Standard reflection: Continued work

Pass No: _____

So what happened was: _____

The Epic Fail Pass began as a collaborative writing piece which led to collective synthesis for helping students respond to instances of personal failure.



Johan Cruyff is one of the greatest footballers of all time. He played a critical role in the debut of the Dutch Total Football philosophy in the 1974 FIFA World Cup, and continued the style of play with club teams including Ajax and FC Barcelona, ultimately becoming an equally impactful coach for generations to come.

During my third residency at VCFA, I took part in the documentation workshop intended for incoming students. Aware of the impulsive need to edit myself for a new group of people based on my own weird constructs of what I thought was "good," workshop settings provided me with alternate ways of thinking and making within a group environment. I felt it was necessary to participate, partly because I was on the Montpelier campus for the first time, and mostly because Lorena Howard-Sheridan's design and presentation about applying personal documentation to preexisting structures for measurement resonated with me.

I was hungry to get lost and find my way again.

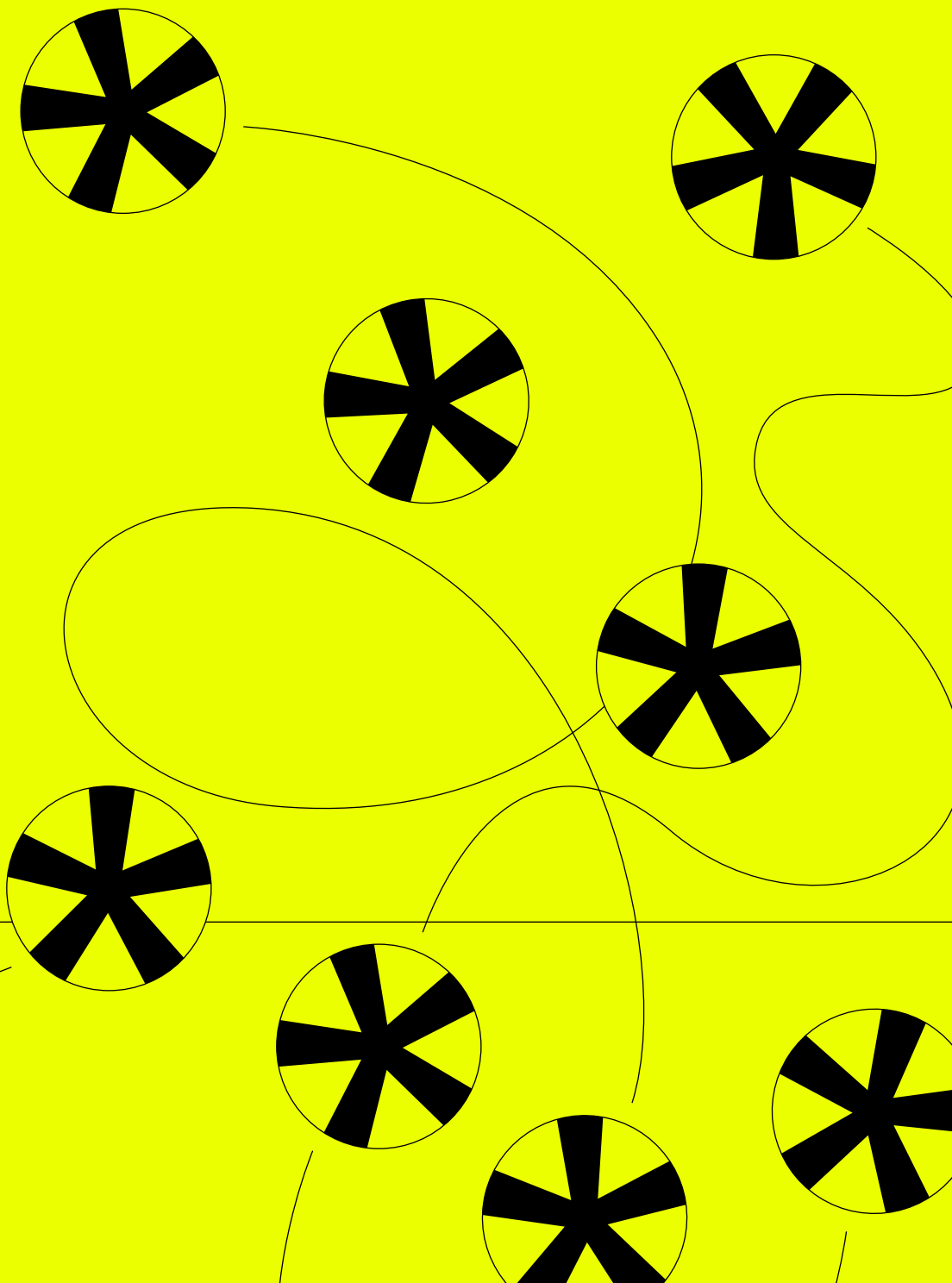
At the end of the week, I timidly volunteered to talk through my documentation, which used positioning on soccer fields—à la Johan Cruyff—to map out my daily systems of support and inspiration. Being in Vermont with a new community of designers opened up my world. I collected new experiences from critiques and micro-lectures by faculty and from late nights in the beloved Dewey lounge. I balanced this by confining myself to my dorm room to write, reflect, and phone home to sustain my sense of self.

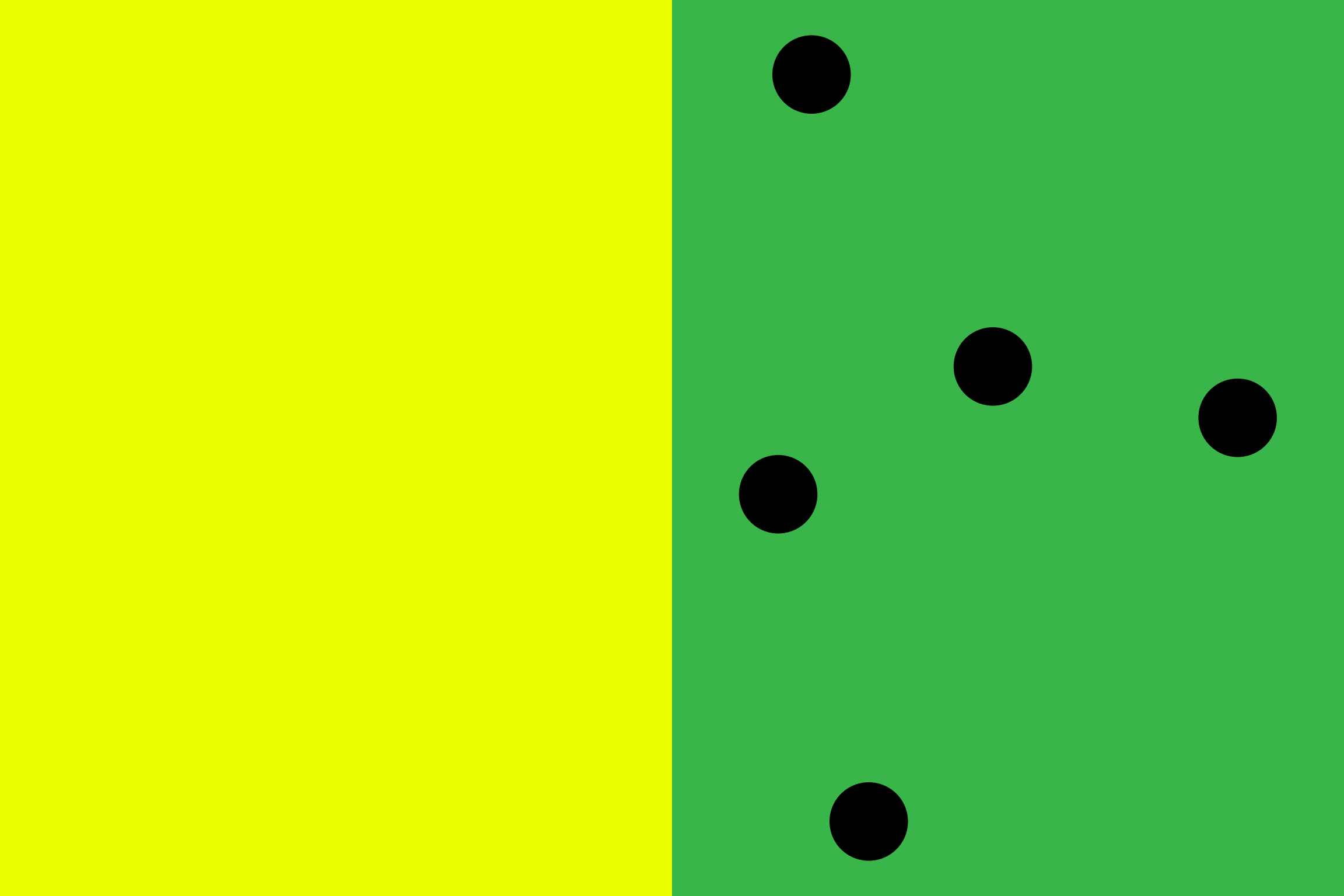
To apply relational thinking within organizations, we should work to decouple our self-worth from our labor of making things, though this seems nearly impossible in a capitalist society. As I'm beginning to practice this myself, I've sought out ways for my students to join me by offering them opportunities to **embrace chance and failure** within the supportive space of our classroom. With a dear friend, I designed and co-authored an "Epic Fail Pass" intended to redeem failed ideas through a combination of self-reflection and awareness. Embracing speculative practices and personal growth is a wrestling match. The time they require is not often available or understood in environments that could greatly benefit from them. In teaching design, it seems just as important to educate others about flourishing in the world

as it is to teach a canon of history and style. Relational thinking, or network thinking, can help us make better contributions to current happenings and become aware of the **poetic possibilities** that occur within our individual processes.

Returning to the idea of design as a verb, challenging whatever our individual and traditional understandings of graphic design are can instigate new ways of seeing and being that consider societal norms and standards as constant areas of exploration. ²⁴ Such examinations may also result in failure—a significant aspect of work and care—which is, admittedly, scary to embrace and easy to avoid. In continuing to educate myself as a designer while also stepping into the role of an educator, these two roles are in constant dialogue according to the belief that we must utilize our sense of place to communicate clearly to an intended group or community. How we **include and empathize** with other people's experiences through form and content is a huge undertaking to be tactfully aware of, no matter how simple or complicated our processes become. As students endlessly position their work as a final and perfect thing, I try to deconstruct their expectations for commercial perfection—and my own—by helping them find joy in their process and encouraging them to speculate on the effects and consequences of future placement. To unlearn and rebuild a graphic design practice has become its own form of redemption.

²⁴
An idea extracted
from "The Design
Imagination"
by Zoë Ryan
from *Designs for
Different Futures*,
2019.







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feed
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PART ONE

While I was beginning to design a text style version of my quirky tape font to use in things I make—including this thesis—I stopped myself again. As a generalist, I had yet to practice the extensive accessibility work that a type designer takes on, let alone strap myself down to my chair to set the typeface's proper kerning. I am a restless person who needs external motivation and a lot of caffeine to achieve idyllic levels of completeness. I had begun to feel attached to its refinements, which made it all the more difficult to let go of until I realized something else: this is supposed to be a reactivation of the past.

In 2018, VCFA faculty member Silas Munro presented relational graphic design history centering on the work of W. E. B. DuBois at the Typographics festival in New York City. ❶ I watched the recording while educating myself via YouTube in the thick of stay-at-home orders, and it was the first time I had ever learned about Du Bois. In a multi-course meal, Munro showed how Du Bois's data portraits of Black America engineered the Modernist aesthetic that was later adapted by European designers after his 1920 curatorial exhibition at the Paris Exposition. The drafted letterforms in his statistical charts, constructed by the materiality of amended architectural drafting templates, served as the inspiration for the typeface "Du Bois" by Vocal Type's Tré Seals. At the time, this typeface was being used on the website for BIPOC Design History, ❷ a curriculum Munro created in collaboration with VCFA faculty members Tasheka Arceneaux-Sutton and Ramon Tejada, VCFA alumna Pierre Bowins, and others. BIPOC Design History was partly responsible for why I ended up at VCFA, and the pragmatic tactility of "Du Bois," along with Tré Seals' other typefaces, heightened my awareness of underrepresented narratives.

(1) Silas Munro, "Design History as Activism: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Universal Negro Improvement Association," Typographics 2018.

(2) "BIPOC Design History," <https://bipocdesignhistory.com/>.

Before attending grad school, I wanted to prove to myself that I could take on a self-initiated project as the creative work at my day job became steadily outsourced. I had been feeling down on myself for repeatedly making things for marketing campaigns that I felt evoked "nothingness" thanks to the reality of our contemporary era and living through the daily demands of late-market capitalism. I craved to make something of real substance, that told a more interconnected story, and that others could relate to—this is why I loved graphic design in the first place.

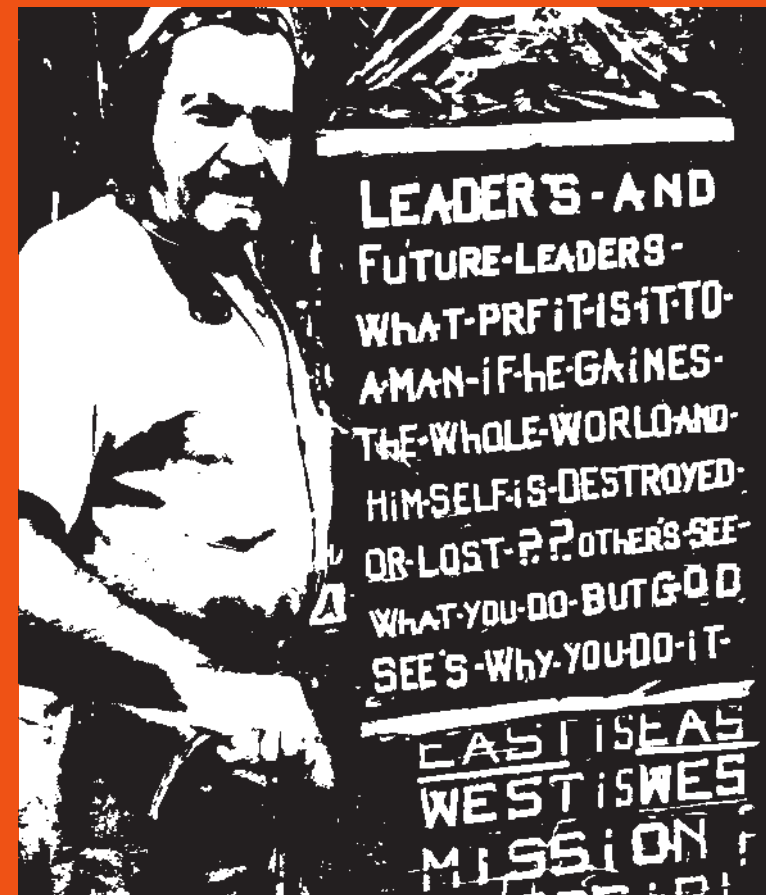
I was living in New York when the pandemic started to be taken seriously. Confined to my tiny apartment in Brooklyn with a semi-feral cat, I was reeling from the heartache and frustration of not knowing when I would see my Belgium-bound partner again. Like many non-New Yorkers, I returned to my hometown after weekly pleas from my caring and concerned father. Wanting to tough it out alone seemed selfish. Being home meant I could be hugged and fed the most comforting of meals. Learning from women who made a life for themselves during the Great Depression, my mother provided the additional perk of knowing how to pack the pantry for an apocalypse. Returning home as an adult wasn't easy, nor was it a smooth adjustment to develop an improved relationship with my parents outside of my role as their child. I spent my

days digging through my personal archive of objects and art supplies, doing my work at the same desk that spurred my adolescent interest in web design, and getting in touch with my creative roots, until I came across my relationship with *him*.

In the entrance to my parents' cozy, New England colonial home, a decorative iron-and-glass table holds an engraved lamp that illuminates the top contour of the long, cream-colored sofa. To the left of it, before the room comes into its full display, sits a framed photo of my grandfather, Federico, standing in front of one of his many handmade yard signs with a loose translation from the King James Bible. The imperfect lettering offers no proper punctuation except for question marks, some periods, and Gutenberg dashes for spaces. The sign itself is made with a handful of humble materials that he likely thrifted from past projects. Anything extra was purchased from the local hardware store.

My grandfather was the first graphic designer I knew. A solitary World War II veteran and Italian immigrant, he found his self-expression in art and written words. During his retirement, he worked as a custodian at the local high school and crafted sign art—among many other projects of various mediums—out of his garage. His yard was filled with plywood signs. Through them, he shared his opinions and thoughts on current events with all those who drove past his yard, and eventually through regular features in the community newspaper. I had created portraits of my grandfather before, but reflecting on his history in the medium that we both knew best became a séance that opened the generational story in the walls of my own practice. ③

As a kid, I found his behavior strange and his home and yard peculiar. He had built the house himself after the war, missing a



My grandfather, Federico "Freddy" Paolucci, with one of his yard signs, 2008.

Graphic design
has always had
the potential to
be political in its
ability to shape
public opinion
and influence
behavior.

middle finger that was shot off during the Battle of the Bulge. (4) He dug a creek into the land to outline his house and filled it with koi fish. A husky guarded the maze of a greenhouse garden, and at some point a horse lived in the garage. He grew his own stock of cannabis, with sunflowers for its camouflage, and took on a wealth of other creative hobbies. I was most struck by the large plywood signs, sometimes sawed into purposeful shapes and painted to suit his content. Shortly following the September 11 attacks, a large red apple with a bite missing exclaimed a sharp message for terrorist perpetrators. Each sign featured crude letters drafted with electrical tape, a thoughtful material which endured the tumultuous weather of the Northeast, blunted with the blade of a box cutter. He was unmatched when it came to lawn signs declaring political allegiance.

Graphic design has always had the potential to be political in its ability to shape public opinion and influence behavior. My adoption of his font was a grasp for something bigger than myself. Knowing the pain of my father's upbringing and his own ambitions for success, the tape font clued me into the grit his father ingrained in him to succeed in the American market. Growing up in a poor household of eight and many pets, my dad's future depended on his willpower to get out of his hometown, serve in the military, educate himself enough to have a lucrative career as a sales engineer, and use his inherited charisma to attract consumers toward the latest computing technologies. He's to thank for my early access to a computer with Windows 98, leading to my rise as an

(3) This is inspired by Gordon Matta-Clark's work "Splitting" and "Days End."

(4) The Battle of the Bulge was a major battle during World War II in the winter of 1944-45 where Germany sought to split the Allied forces.

AOL Instant Messenger buddy icon designer for any North Providence middle schooler seeking customized aesthetics. ⑤

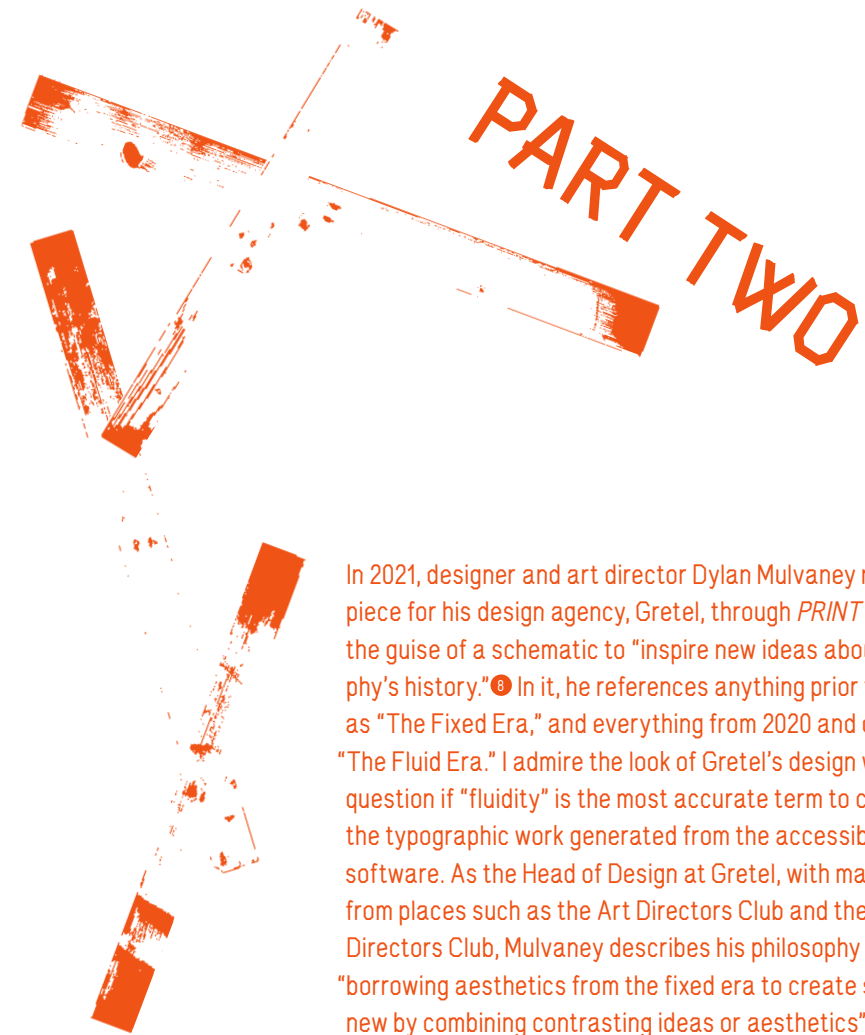
As soon as I digitized the original analog Federico, I shared it on social media for my future fans and users. I made a portfolio piece in case something like this might help me get hired for a better job, editing its form based on my assumptions of popular taste. I created reels on Instagram to increase my viewership and share my methodologies. ⑥ I fashioned polls for my friends and followers to help me decide on which uppercase "G" to go with. Like the suffocating power dynamics of an emotionally manipulative ex-boyfriend, I flocked to my social feed to be validated and rewarded for putting on an apron for my most minor of efforts. ⑦ Finally, my college roommate—who had unwillingly experienced every aspect of my personality—stepped in to comment, "If you're making a font about tape, why not just do it in tape?"

(5) When I was in middle school, I was suspended for drinking on the school bus. During my week in isolation, I made a website for every girl my age in North Providence to retrieve custom AIM buddy icons that I created on MS Paint and Corel.

(6) See page 23.

(7) A revelation from a conversation with my friend and former coworker, Nina Lucey. Together, we often discuss intersectional feminism, the subordination of gender, and compliment each other on our choices for comfortable footwear.





In 2021, designer and art director Dylan Mulvaney released a PR piece for his design agency, Gretel, through *PRINT* magazine in the guise of a schematic to “inspire new ideas about typography’s history.”⁽⁸⁾ In it, he references anything prior to the ‘90s as “The Fixed Era,” and everything from 2020 and onward as “The Fluid Era.” I admire the look of Gretel’s design work but question if “fluidity” is the most accurate term to categorize the typographic work generated from the accessible design software. As the Head of Design at Gretel, with many honors from places such as the Art Directors Club and the Type Directors Club, Mulvaney describes his philosophy of fluidity as “borrowing aesthetics from the fixed era to create something new by combining contrasting ideas or aesthetics” and applying them to the inherent democratization of today’s tools, further promoting Modernism. Additionally, his characterizations of each sub-era are superficial at best and blatantly inaccurate at their worst. To call a mashup of popular styles “fluid” negates the relational history that is buried within each and instead glorifies the internal hegemony that constructs their pedestals.

(8) Dylan Mulvaney, “Typography: From Fixed to Fluid,” *PRINT*, June 27, 2021.

Typography: Ideological and Design Changes

Field	Year(s)	Key	Key	Key	Key
Pre-Modern	Classicism	1700	Structure	Traditional	Conventional
	Humanism	1450	Classical Revival	Formal	Classical
	Art & Craft	1880	Line & Application	Decorative	Ornate
	Art Nouveau	1890	Decorative	Decorative	Ornate
Early Modern	Expressionism	1910	Unusual Emphasis	Geometric	Unconventional
	Suprematism	1915	Simplicity	Geometric	Minimal
	De Stijl	1918	Art Free	Geometric	Minimal
Avant-Garde Modern	Futurism	1909	Speed	Kinetic	Dynamic
	De Stijl	1917	Geometric Structure	Abstract	Restrained
	Constructivism	1918	Abstract	Geometric	Abstract
	The New Typography	1918	Abstract	Geometric	Abstract
Commercial Modern	Art Deco	1925	Flowing, Geometric	Decorative	Restrained
Late Modern	International Typographic Style	1958	Simple, Structured	Minimal	Practical
	Russian Typography	1920	Formal	Decorative	Restrained
	Functional Typography	1920	Minimal	Formal	Restrained
Eclectic Modern	Regionalism/Localism	1950	Art Direction	Minimal	Restrained
	Rustic Typography	1950	Classical	Formal	Restrained
Postmodern	Neofunctionalism	1957	Playful, Practical	Classical	Restrained
	New Wave	1960	Diversity	Expressive	Unconventional
	Emancipated Typography	1960	Unconventional	Playful	Unconventional
	Multiethnic Typographies	1960	Unconventional	Unconventional	Unconventional
Field	Postmodernism	Today	Formal	Artistic	Unconventional

Gretel

When I was younger, I had a greyhound that my family rescued from a local racetrack—a place where Italian grandfathers often went to smoke cigars and let loose away from their wives. I loved and pitied my darling greyhound for her elegance and her traumatic past. During our walks, other kids would shout out their disgust in response to her appearance, exclaiming how she looked like a giant rat. I often retaliated with tearful anger by stating that she was, in fact, very regal. I was proud for rescuing our greyhound from the harsher realities of a retired race dog

(9) Goldendoodles are designer dogs bred from golden retrievers and poodles. Designer dog breeds are intentionally bred by crossing two purebred dogs with the goal of creating a new hybrid that combines desirable traits from both parent breeds. In the case of goldendoodles, the result is a dog that is intelligent, friendly, and hypoallergenic.

and was quick to defend her because of it. It is very easy to pass over “the ugly” in favor of popular taste. I found myself battling this exact pressure as I wrestled between whether Federico should be slick and elegant or rugged and imperfect. In my initial choices to refine it for a purely digital environment, I lost the materiality that made my design and concept more honest. In mixing their perception of “high” and “low,” top-ranking design agencies—like Gretel—create work that represents how a lot of commercial design is being made today. Their projects are beautiful in a similar way that goldendoodles are beautiful, using an array of learned and accepted styles to create conventionally marketable work that feels fresh and new due to its reliance on current technology. It is much harder for a designer to envision new possibilities when there are so many walls that lock us into formulaic ways of making. I am still guilty of this.

By pulling from a fixed past where history is regarded linearly from an American and European perspective, we easily tread past the marginal histories that can expand our thinking, and instead, reinforce a dominant economic system. Though I do think we are approaching an era of fluidity, we still need to find out where our borders exist and why. In considering the typographic trends in the 2010s–2020s, it would be interesting for commercial design agencies to also publish think pieces

~~a fixed past~~

marginal histories

that critique our tools, how the demands of our society fuel them, and how we've arrived where we are now since the rise of relational design in the early 2000s. However, such disruption comes at the cost of also acknowledging their own exploitation of labor that sustains the ongoing era of Neoliberal Design, a term coined by VCFA faculty Ian Lynam.¹⁰ Understanding design in the context of political economy can provide insight into its aesthetics and functions. Instead of permeating subjugation through nice-looking commercial methodologies, we need to hack the societal, the cultural, and the political to begin mapping out new worlds and ways of thinking.¹¹

Designing with a surplus of accessible digital tools at our fingertips has led us to the stark reality of the isolated, on-demand production that I've been trying to run away from. Sure, it is easy to make beautiful things that move, but without rich context there is a meaninglessness that passes us by just as quickly as our Instagram stories. Ironically, our wildly interconnected world quickly morphs into a lonely place, especially when you find yourself on the outside of it. If we learned anything from a global pandemic, it is those who organize communities who take the future they want. To agree with some of the ideas put forth by Gretel, type design itself has indeed grown increasingly accessible, but as my VCFA cohort Ray Masaki most recently recounted in *It's Nice That*, people are designing stylized fonts more than ever without thinking about how they may be gatekeeping style to a dominant culture by limiting language support.¹² Designers should practice responsibly.

As I stewed in my indecision over formalizing my own analog version of Federico during another round of Why Am I Doing This to Myself, I felt it was important to stay true to both my

source material and what I wanted to accomplish. The truth is, I hadn't considered its applied future beyond my own personal use, but the font resonates with others for feeling human. I treat the font like it is an old family recipe that I'm sharing with others who want to taste it later. I've met its cousins. Friends from overseas send me every tape font specimen they spot.¹³ I keep my eyes peeled for anything made from tape and save it in the vault that is my iPhone. More than worthless likes, my process in redrafting Federico has led to a collection of unique experiences and histories. To quote Silas Munro, "History is relational." Maybe this is where a graphic design practice starts to become a significantly influential one.

(10) Ian Lynam, "Plux Quba: the Era of Neoliberal Design," *Medium*, January 30, 2020.

(11) Zoë Ryan, "The Design Imagination," in *Designs for Different Futures*, ed. Kathryn B. Heisinger et al (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2019).

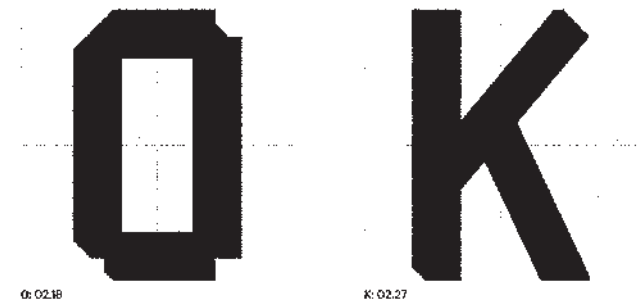
(12) Ray Masaki, "Forward Thinking: How typography can make a more inclusive future," *It's Nice That*, January 4, 2023, <https://www.itsnicethat.com/features/forward-thinking-how-typography-can-make-a-more-inclusive-future-graphic-design-040123>.

(13) See page 37.

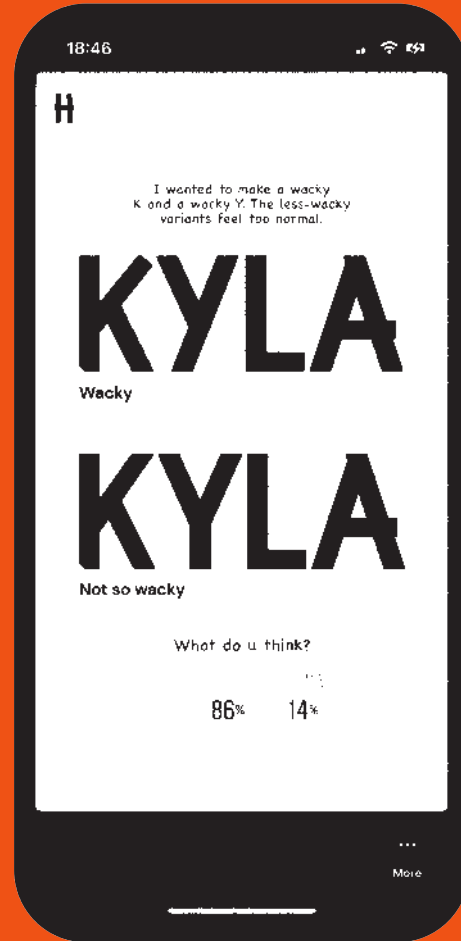
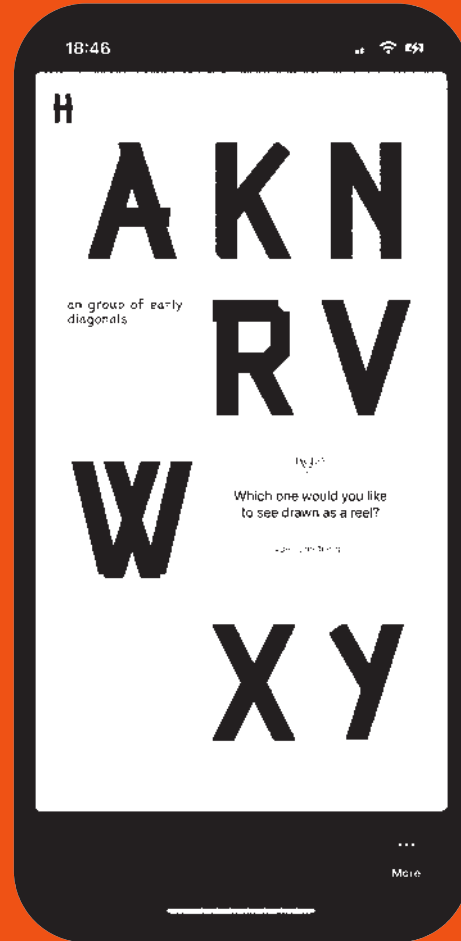
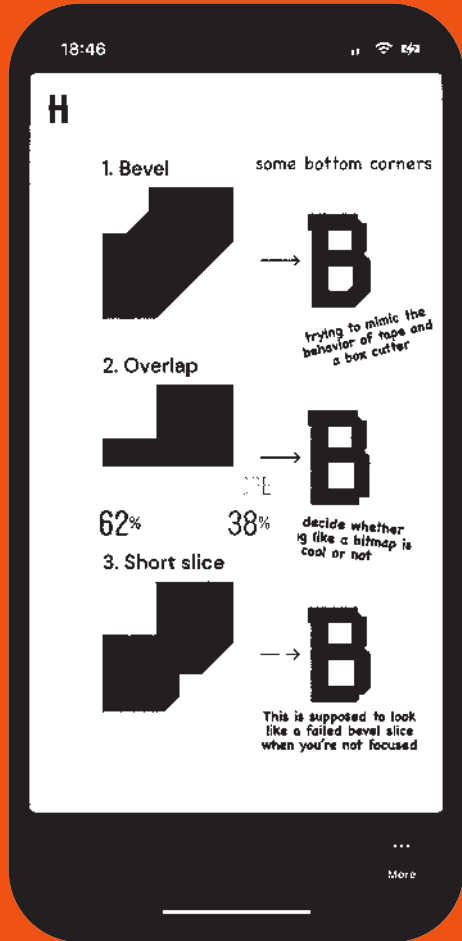


LEADER'S - AND
FUTURE-LEADERS -
WHAT-PROFIT-IS-IT-TO-
A-MAN-IF-HE-GAINES-
THE-WHOLE-WORLD-AND-
HIM-SELF-IS-DESTROYED-
OR-LOST-?? OTHERS SEE-
WHAT-YOU-DO-BUT **GOD**
SEE'S-WHY-YOU-DO-IT-

ABCDEFGHIH
IJKLMNOPQR
STUVWXYZ



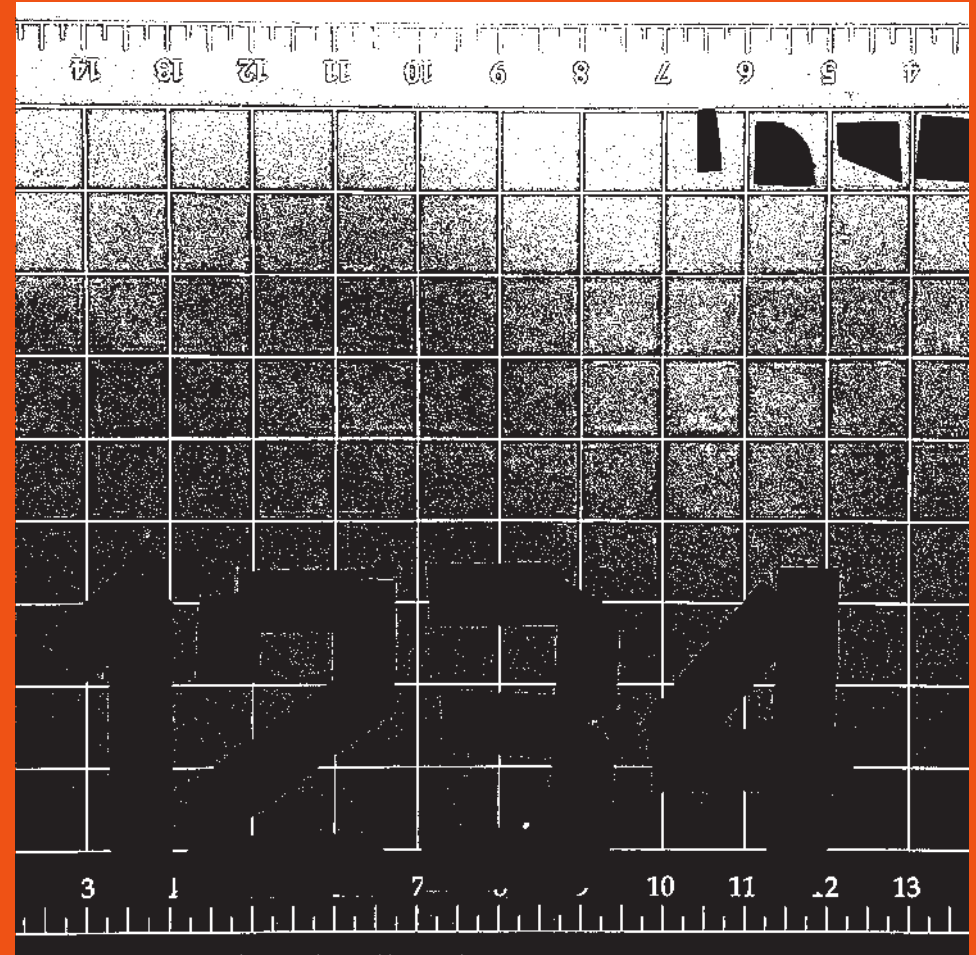
Federico began as a digitization of one of my grandfather's signs (see page 7). Initially, I focused on designing it for others rather than myself, seeking wider acceptance. I simplified it and gave it clean edges to make it look more polished and successful. While the feedback I received was positive, I felt that I wasn't getting the most out of the material.



Examples of crowdsourcing feedback on my design decisions via Instagram Stories while explaining and sharing my process.

A Á Â Ã Ä Å Ç È É Ê Ë Ì Í Î Ï
H I J K L M N O P Q
R S T U V W X Y Z
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
! ? & # . , : ; / \ _ ` ~ + =
{ } [] () < > ≤ ≥

My first, purely digital character set prior to working with the Glyphs program.



Dissatisfied with the digital, I began drafting out letters on every surface in my home.

People
over
profit

a jolly kyla made
an exquisite
zucchini frittata
and paired it
with a bright
and savory
arugula salad

I broke away from the computer by purchasing large sheets of paper and two-years worth of masking tape. From spray painting in my garage to spending sunny days outside taping across paper, I began to develop a character set that was a looser representation of my grandfather's work. He worked in all capitals and I subconsciously jumped into lowercase forms.

Amid countless disheartening world events that have been occurring, the act of taping continues to be a cathartic experience for me.

feed
feed
feed

AB EF
CD JG

HK NO
LM PQ

RS WX
UV YZ!

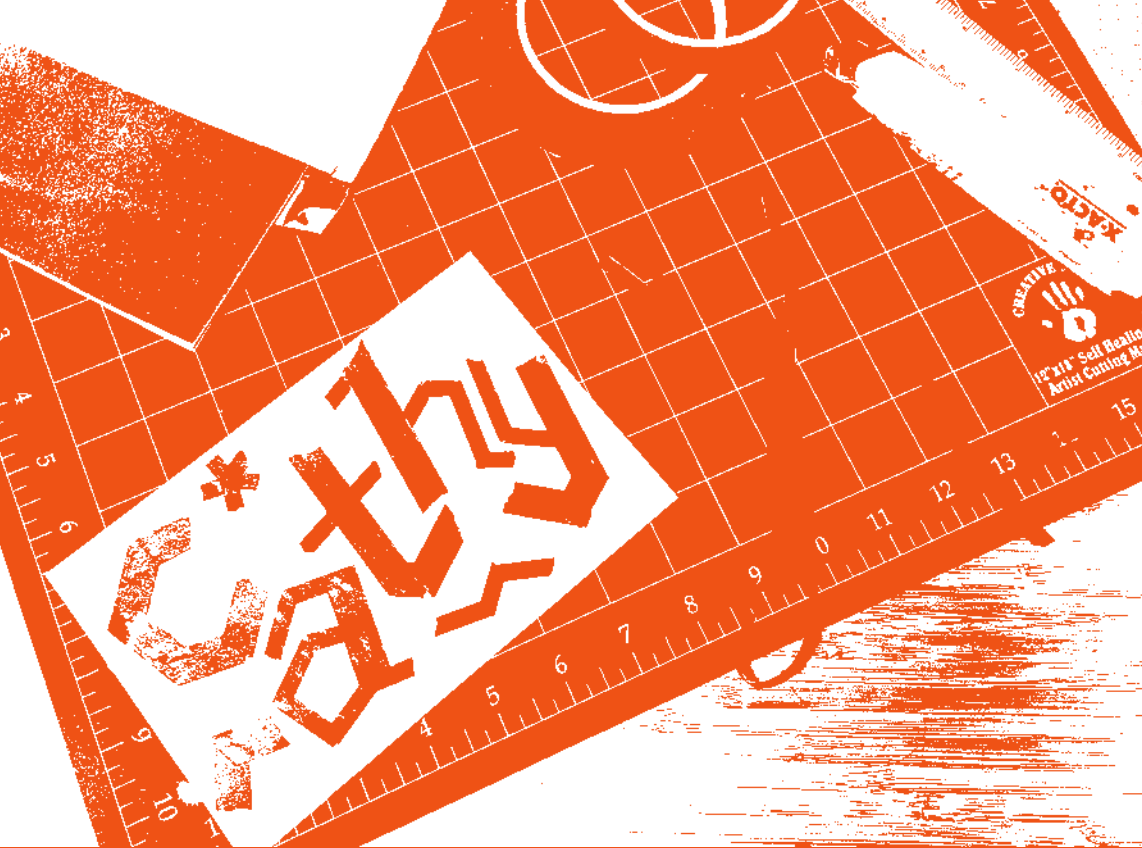
?/ ^ \$%
&! #>

ab fg
cd hij
e_ _!j

km pq
no r
_+ t*s

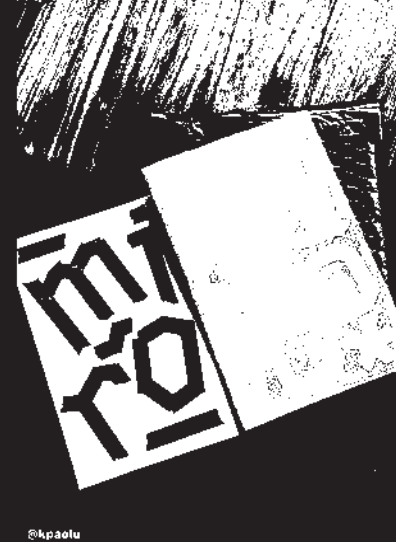
uv 01!
wx 23
yz ^.^

45
68 *
79



Making a zine of my masking tape letters was a way to enjoy my process. It also acted as a way to "finalize" my idea into a distributable form, lacking the pressure and immediacy of social media, but providing the practical applications I craved.

In my second semester at VCFA, I took a risograph class at the School of Visual Arts. I ended up having lucky risograph (<https://luckyrisograph.press>) in New York City print the zine, and I ended up with a ton of copies. I sold them via social media, mostly to the folks who were supporting the development of Federico from the beginning, and included personalized specimens with their names drafted in tape.

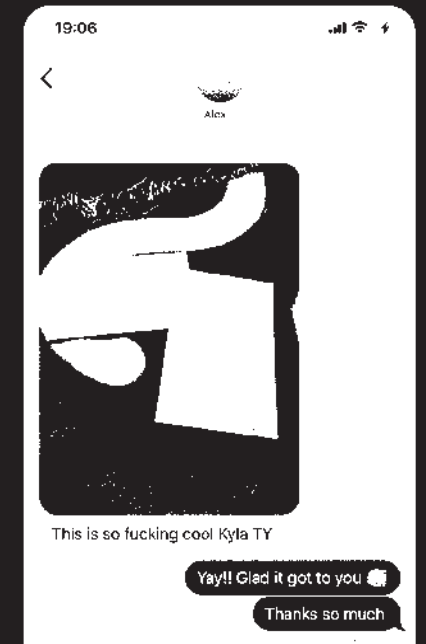


@kpaolu

Federico in LA



obsessed.



FEDERICO TEXT

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O
P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o
p q r s t u v w x y z

Some people say a man is made outta mud. A poor man's made outta muscle and blood. Muscle and blood and skin and bones, a mind that's a-weak and a back that's strong. You load 16 tons, what do you get? Another day older and deeper in debt. Saint Peter, don't you call me 'cause I can't go. I owe my soul to the company store.

Federico Text is an imperfect-but-readable sans serif that caters to the design tools I use on a daily basis. In preparation for my thesis, I experimented with stretched out default system fonts to imitate the design aesthetics of local bakeries that operate without a professional graphic designer. This enabled me to convey local vernacular through type, ultimately resulting in a slimmer version of my previous work. Federico Display is a more indulgent form of rebellion that works best in the context of bold statements.

FEDERICO DISPLAY

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O
P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o
p q r s t u v w x y z

Fred went to the store for quarter-inch sockets and more than fixed a jug of zesty lemonade with sugar galore.

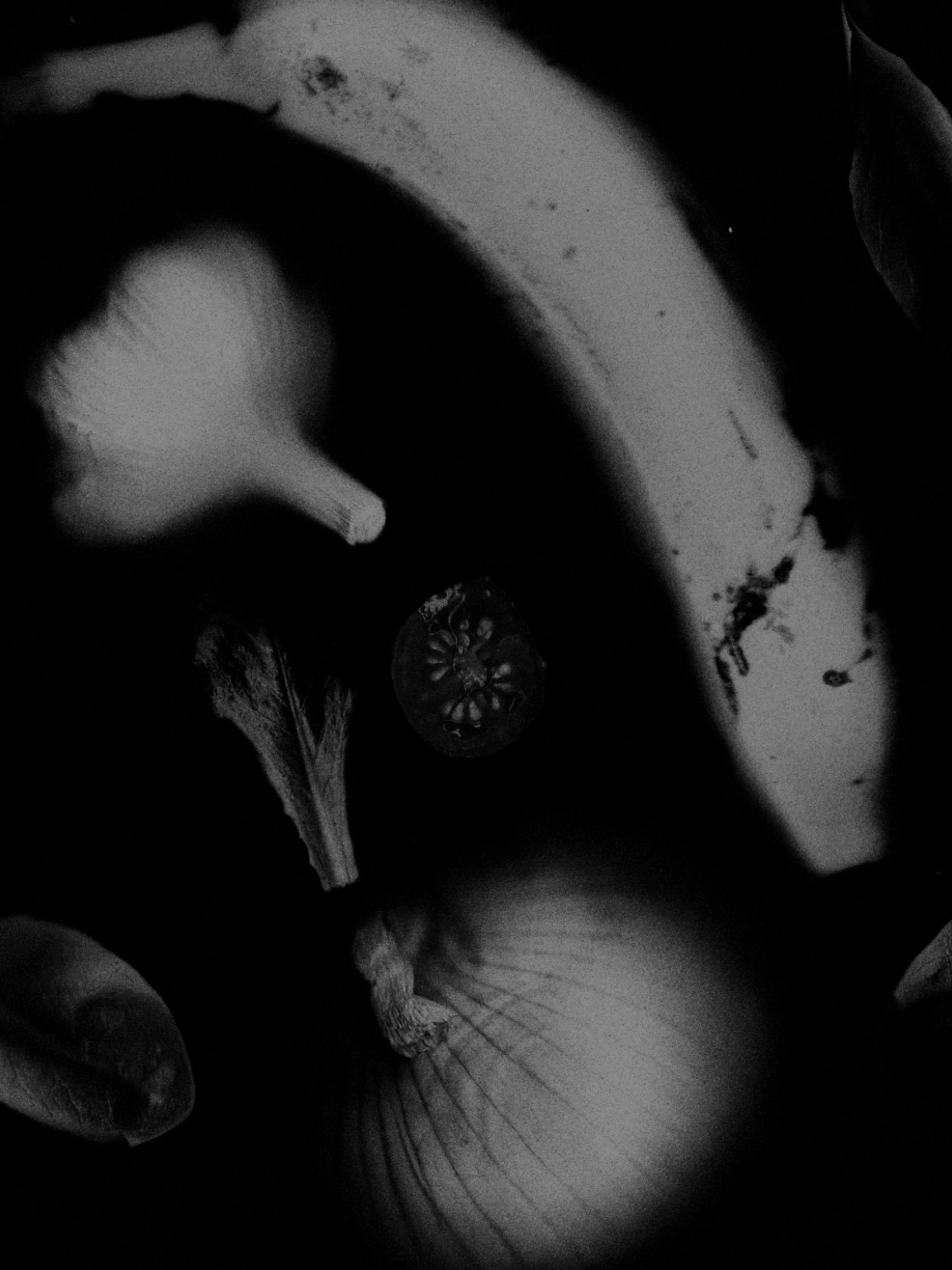


UNiTY
SAY·WHAT·YOU·MEAN
MEAN·WHAT·YOU·SAY









Love is not a doctrine.
Love is letting yourself and others
exist fully and find peace.
It is not always easy.
It is not possessive or limiting.
Love protects our freedom.

A sharp bellow sounds. Ominous and irregular music rushes forward as a pack of faceless modern dancers move erratically like Fruit Ninjas. I wake up. There are no more bananas. It's time to go grocery shopping again. I have a relationship with supermarkets. They are my safe havens when I feel lost in a city. I go as much as I please, saying as few phrases as necessary to be a little less of a tourist as I try to take my place elsewhere: Hola! S'il vous plaît. No necesito una bolsa, oui, merci in both places. Back at home, I waft through the easy silence of the self-checkout line.

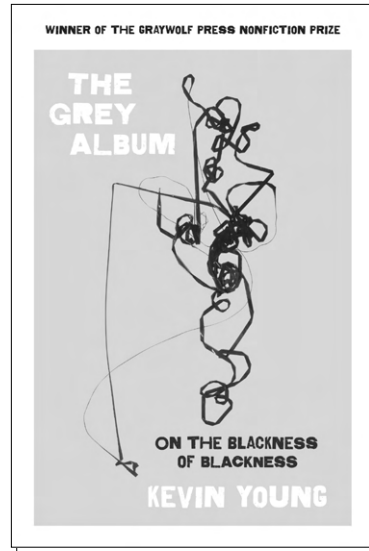
I seek out the necessary ingredients. This is a quiet, thoughtful time to peruse each aisle and imagine what my life would be like if I were a person who bought kiwis on a regular basis. I find anomalies, things you can only find in that city. A memory of time spent, a love letter to the experience. At home, I buy the basics, the monotonous, routine needs of the everyday: the onions, the tomatoes, the greens, the carbs, the bananas. Things I've learned from my mother and father. Sometimes I recreate memories that transport me to another time like the cold rain on the day I tried to make a signature Flemish carbonnade. Maybe I felt happier then, or less responsible. I think of what it's like to have an abundance of things and what I'm going to do with them. I butter my toast. I sprinkle everything bagel seasoning on top. I crunch.

In creating this thesis, I have developed a cookbook for myself that documents my process and bears witness to my experiences. Rather than following recipes, I design from memory as a way to understand the contexts in which new ideas are imagined and circulated. Reimagining a design practice is a new beginning. Ever evolving, just as technologies and societies shift and change around us, graphic designers must continue to seek out diverse perspectives and experiences to shape a more expansive and tastier future.

MEMORY Bank



I walked around the east side of Providence—my old stomping grounds—and listened to an audiobook. I drank iced coffee, picked flowers, documented my former apartments windows, and got caught in the rain.



The New Yorker
True Blue
 Peter Schjeldahl
 June 21, 2010

Nielsen Norman Group
Brutalism and Antidesign
 Kate Moran
 November 5, 2017

The New Yorker
Race, the Remix.
 David Shields
 April 20, 2012



MICA: The History of Black Women in Graphic Design by Tasheka Arceneaux-Sutton and Cheryl D. Miller



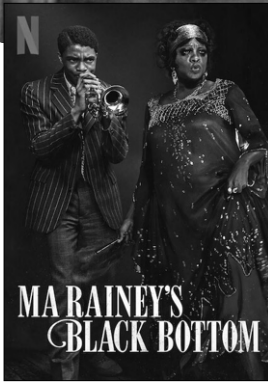
Cooper Union
I Like the Vernacular...
NOT.
Jeffery Keedy
1993

Eye Magazine
Dan Friedman
Peter Rea
Dan Friedman
Autumn 1994

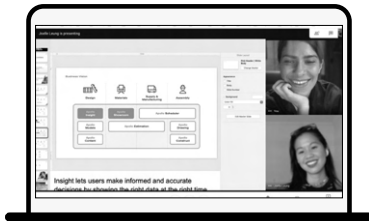
2x4
Fuck Content
Michael Rock
2009

AIGA
April Greiman
Biography by Steven Heller
September 1, 1998

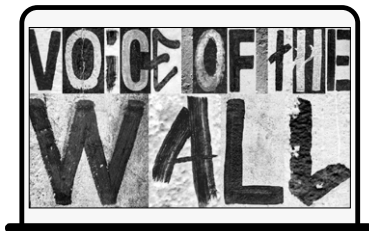
My maternal grandparents, Charlie and Anna, sandwiching their niece. My grandfather's name was actually Celestino, but it was somehow changed to Charles on his death certificate.



I spent time with my childhood best friend, Laura, and her infant son. We visited Cool Licks to get our favorite watermelon sherbert soft-serve. Laura told me she would sometimes do this alone and then play on the swings at the park.

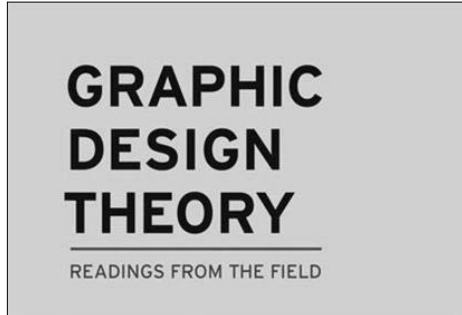
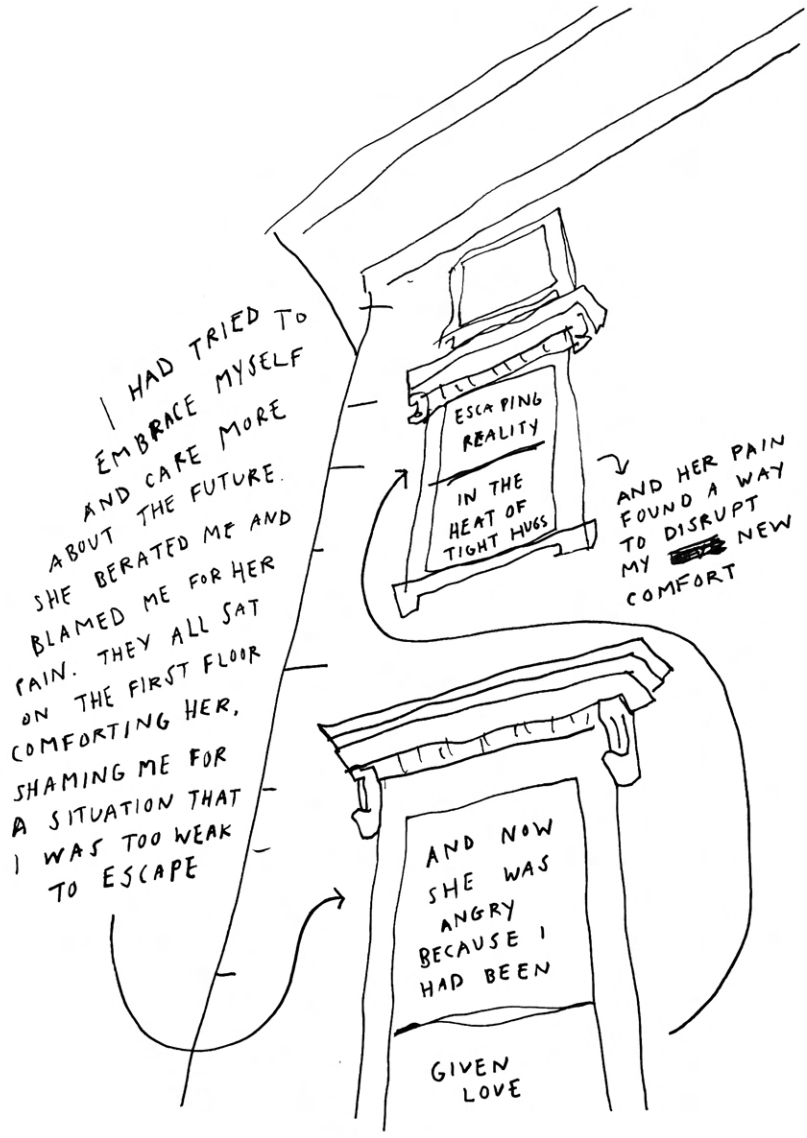


UX Chat with Joelle Leung



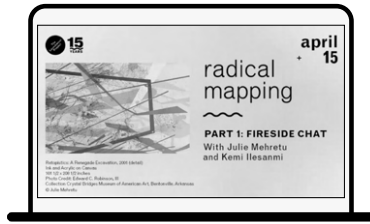
Voice of the Wall by Heimat Berlin

I HAD LACKED A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF CONTROL OVER MYSELF. THERE WAS A NIGHT WHERE I ATE SOMEONE ELSE'S FOOD FROM THE SHARED FRIDGE WHICH SENT ME INTO ANAPHYLAXIS. MY FRIEND WHO HAD A SEVERE STUDDER STRUGGLED IN CALLING 911. THERE WAS A STRING IRRESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR ON MY PART WHICH MADE IT EASY FOR OTHERS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF.

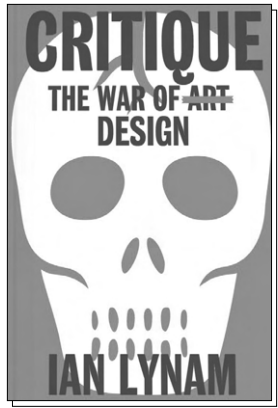


The New York Times
...It's Called Languishing
Adam Grant
May 5, 2021

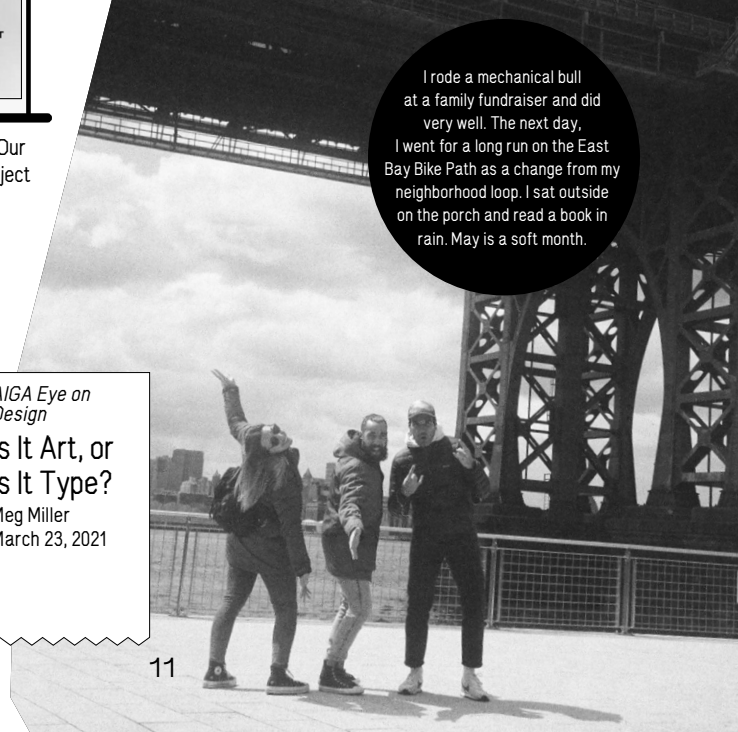
Nielsen Norman Group
DesignOps 101
Kate Kaplan
July 21, 2019

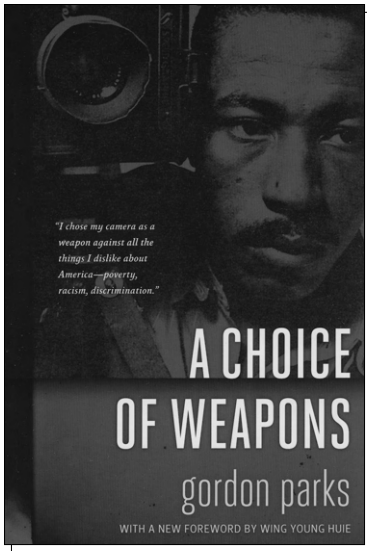


Radical Mapping: Making Meaning in Our Communities by The Laundromat Project



AIGA Eye on Design
Is It Art, or Is It Type?
Meg Miller
March 23, 2021

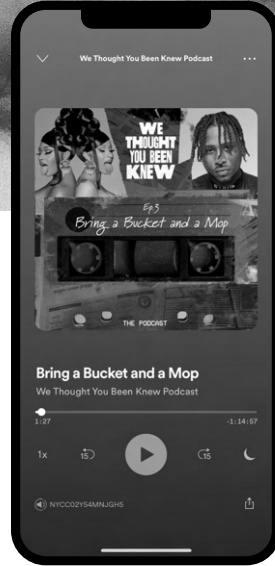
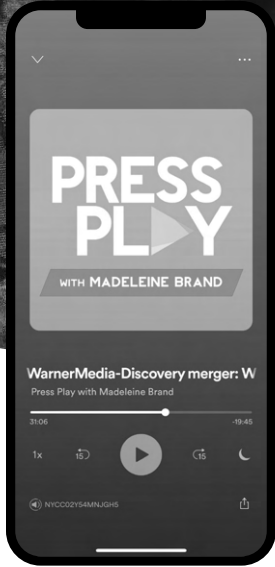




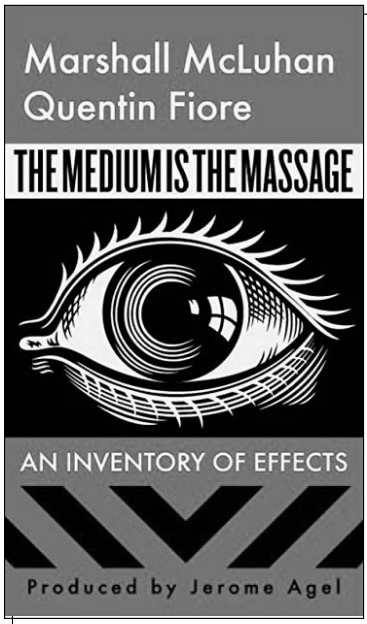
AIGA Eye on Design
Can I Be An Artist Here?
 Cortney Cassidy
 May 10, 2021

Graphic Design Theory
Designing Programmes
 Karl Gerstner
 1964

It's Nice That
What Can Designers Learn From Failing?
 Emily Gosling
 December 14, 2014



I needed New York. I took a train and stayed with Alison for a few days. I ran in Cental Park and simultaneously watched for birds. I spent my afternoons visiting friends who I could finally hug again.



VCFA Graphic Design Global Studio Sessions: Johannesburg & Abidjan



Walker Art Center: The Design Imagination, by Zoë Ryan



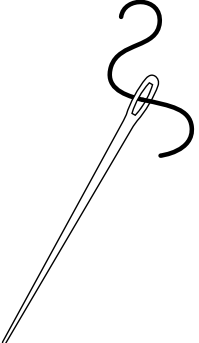
Internet(s) of Everything Session 3: Mindy Seu, Shannon Mattern & Dan Taeyoung, Moderated by Meg Miller for Are.na

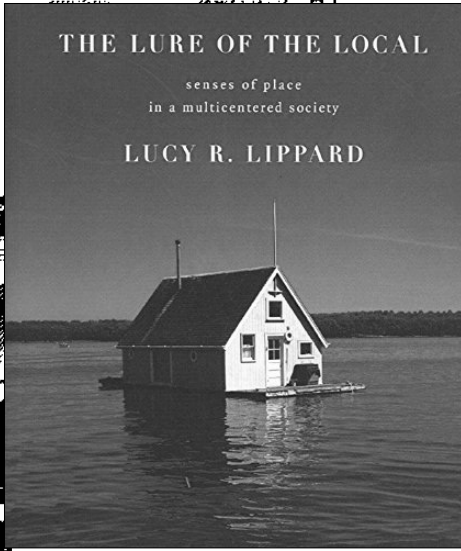
Graphic Design Theory
Designing Our Own Graves
 Dmitri Siegel
 2006

Knight Fellowship
On Gathering
 Mindy Seu
 2020

Personal Blog
The Cuteness of White Noise
 Laurel Schwulst
 Summer 2019

Places Journal
Maintenance and Care
 Shannon Mattern
 November 2018





THE LURE OF THE LOCAL
senses of place
in a multicentered society
LUCY R. LIPPARD

AIGA Eye on Design
We Need Graphic
Design Histories
That Look Beyond
the Profession
Aggie Toppins
June 10, 2021

AIGA Eye on Design
The People's Graphic
Design Archive Is
Rethinking How We
Talk About Design
History
Ryan Mungia
April 19, 2021



"Ella: The Typographic Link Between
Calligraphy & Brutalism" with Laura Meseguer

The Guardian
The Bad
Feminist
Manifesto
Roxane Gay
August 2, 2014

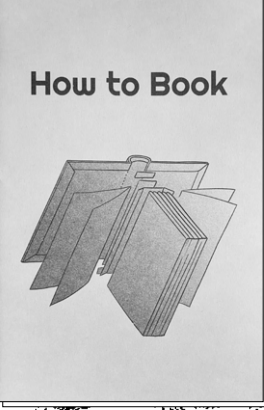
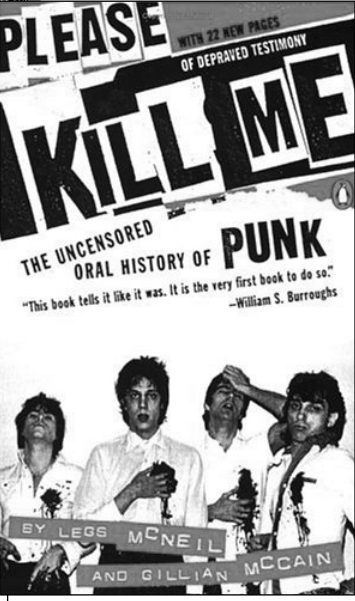
AIGA Eye on Design
Why Aren't More
People Paying
Attention to Podcast
Cover Design?
Rachel del Valle
June 17, 2021

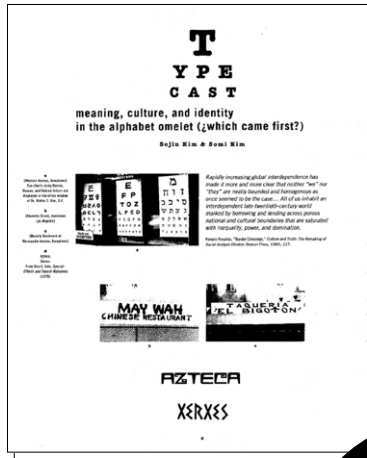


C&
On Death,
Loss, And
Processing
A (Black)
Archive
Legacy Russell
September 10, 2019

AIGA Eye on Design
Ontological Design
Has Become
Influential In Design
Academia –
But What Is It?
JP Hartnett
June 16, 2021

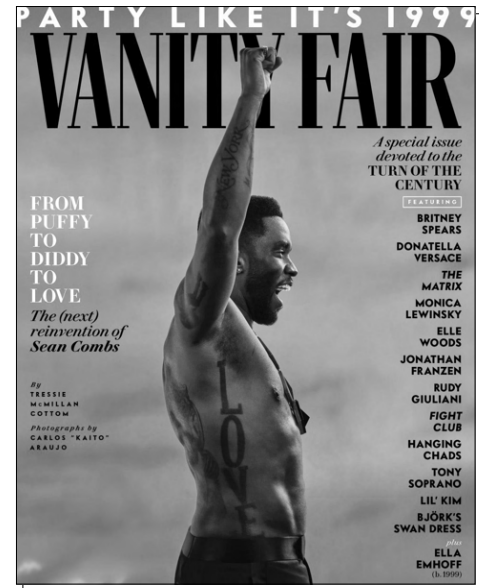
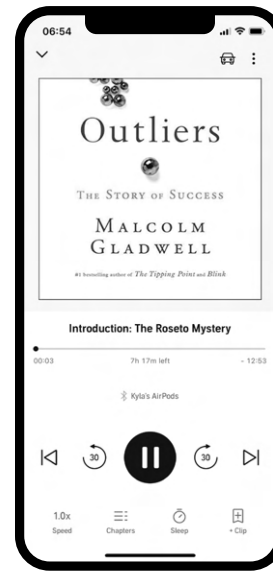
I have relocated to
Barcelona for the summer
to be with my partner and his
family. It has been four months.
I ate a ton of paella, met plenty
of new people in my first week,
and gathered a great deal of
inspiration by settling in.





The New York Times
Apocalypse Right Now
 Maureen Dowd
 July 26, 2021

Julianne, my oldest friend, visited Barcelona for a few days to see the city for the first time. We drank mojitos on every beach. Xavi developed an excellent itinerary for a first-time visitor, but Julianne only wanted to dance and eat pan con tomate.



The Yale Review
Why I Write
 Samuel R. Delany
 December 1, 2020

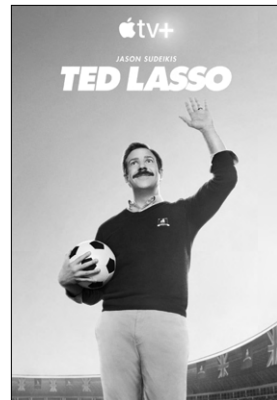
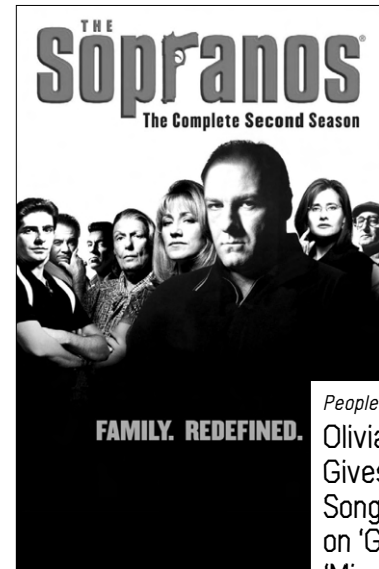
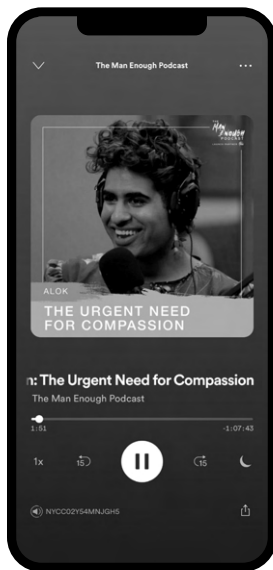
The New York Times
SAMPLING; Borrowing the Blues
 Jake Adam York
 November 21, 1999

Harvard Business Review
How to Talk to an Employee Who Isn't Meeting Their Goals
 by Sabina Nawaz
 February 27, 2019



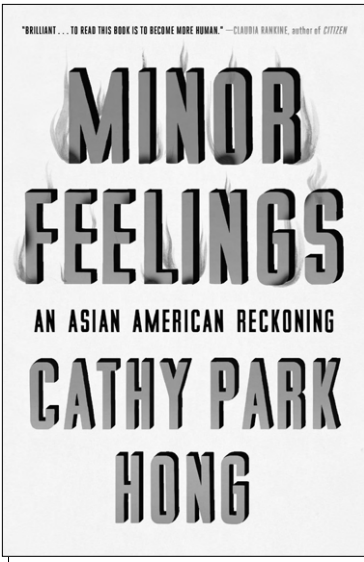
Medium
The Accidental Success and Freaky Legacy of 'Wait (The Whisper Song)'
 Eric Ducker
 February 19, 2020

The New York Times
Why Is Every Young Person in America Watching 'The Sopranos'?
 Willy Staley
 September 29, 2021



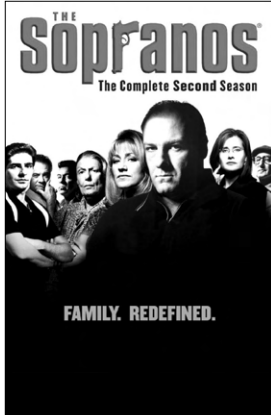
People Magazine
Olivia Rodrigo Gives Paramore Songwriting Credits on 'Good 4 U' for 'Misery Business' Interpolation
 Rachel DeSantis
 August 25, 2021

BBC
Elvis Costello defends Olivia Rodrigo over Brutal plagiarism claim
 Mark Savage
 June 29, 2021

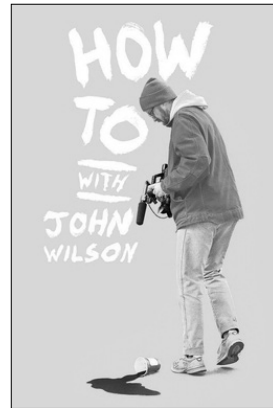


Curbed: Best Of The Nest
**Remembering Fort
 Thunder:
 11 Dudes, Two
 Bands, One
 Working Toilet**
 Mercedes Kraus
 October 29, 2020

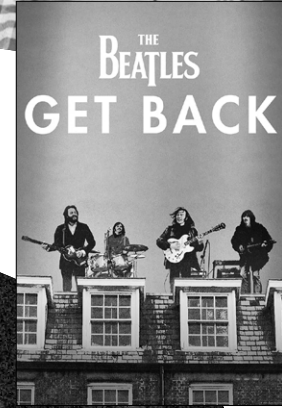
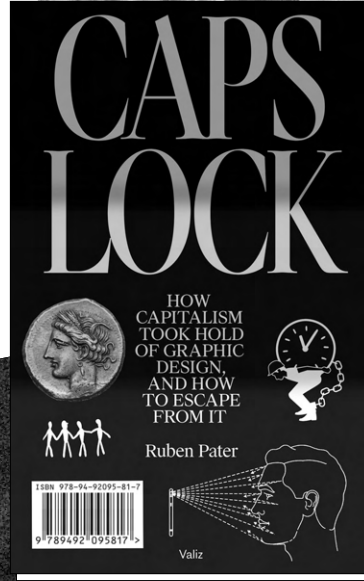
The New York Times
**Looking for
 Graphic Lightning
 From Fort Thunder**
 Roberta Smith
 December 16, 2006



AIGA Eye on Design
**What Does
 "Posthuman
 Design" Actually
 Mean?**
 Margaret Andersen
 March 11, 2019



AIGA Eye on Design
**Why Pay
 Transparency
 Matters in Job
 Negotiations**
 Madeleine Morley
 November 11, 2021

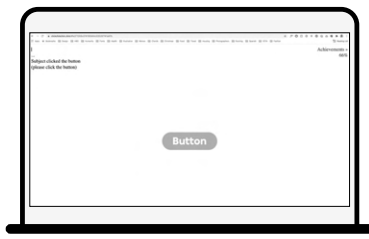


AIGA Eye on Design
**The Graphic
 Support Group
 Podcast Asks
 Designers to Listen
 Deeper and Feel
 More Broadly**
 Somnath Bhatt
 November 15, 2021

AIGA Eye on Design
**In Defense of
 Generalism**
 Chloe Scheffe
 June 20, 2018

The New York Times
**Apocalypse
 Right Now**
 Maureen Dowd
 July 26, 2021

AIGA Eye on Design
**Metaverse will
 disrupt human
 life — here are 7
 companies that
 may win big**
 Brian Sozzi
 December 6, 2021



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AIGA Eye on Design
**Every Design
 Studio Should Be
 a Worker-Owned
 Studio**
 Design Action Collective
 and Partner & Partners
 October 5, 2021

After residency, I went to Brooklyn with a film camera. I ended up signing a lease on a new apartment, and spent hours thumbing through riso-printed zines at Printed Matter. I reflected on my interests, and I rested.

Agl



Kyla,

Your grandmother Anna was a wonderful cook of family Italian specialties. Her fabulous lasagna made its appearance at all of our holidays and special occasions.

When I was dating your Uncle Anthony and was a guest for dinner for the first time, Anna asked if I'd like a second piece of lasagna. Absolutely! What I didn't know, that in addition to the chicken-escarole soup with little meatballs that had already been served, lasagna was an appetizer. After the lasagna, with salad of course, came a full chicken dinner. I learned my lesson and paced myself ever after.

No one could make eggplant parmigiana like Anna. Your mother is the only one who comes close. It's a dish that is labor intensive, but Anna made it frequently and shared it generously. As you remember, Anna's eggplant was unlike anything you get in a restaurant, good as those versions may be. Hers was not swimming in sauce—gravy to us Rhode Islanders—but each piece was dipped in the sauce and then layered with Parmesan cheese. We usually did not eat it as an entrée, but made sandwiches with the eggplant at room temperature, with good Italian bread or rolls. All of Anna's Italian fare, like these and Pasta Fagirole (what non-Italians call pasta fa-ZOOL) and stuffed artichokes, was comfort food.

One of Anna's best dishes was her unusual version of Vermicelli Aglio e Olio. Aglio e Olio is most often made with olive oil, garlic, herbs, and spices, but Anna's version adds a bit of tomato sauce. Although not a true Aglio e Olio, it is delicious. I wanted to recreate it at home, but Anna never used recipes; she always cooked from memory. It was impossible to pin her down for directions. This was the one exception; I got her to tell me step by step how to prepare it. I make it still, these many years after Anna's passing.

Love,
Auntie Connie

Anna's Vermicelli Aglio e Olio

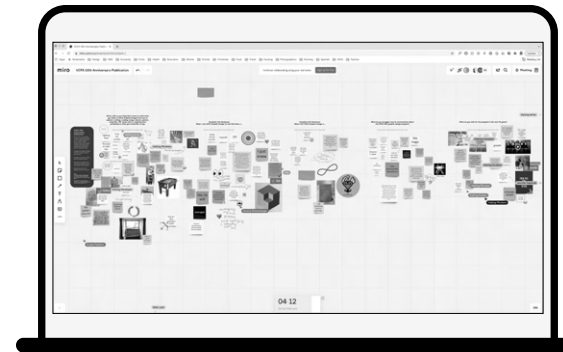
2 tbsp. olive oil
2 cloves garlic
Minced parsley
15 oz. can tomato sauce
1 cup chicken broth
1 can flat anchovies, undrained, finely chopped
1/4 cup grated Parmesan
1/2 tsp. each basil & oregano
Salt & pepper to taste

Heat olive oil and the oil from the anchovies. Add garlic and cook until soft. Do not let the garlic brown. Add parsley, tomato sauce, chicken broth, anchovies, cheese, and seasonings. Cook and stir until anchovies disintegrate, 2-3 minutes.

Simmer for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Toss with 1 lb. cooked vermicelli or capellini. Serve with additional Parmesan.

Buon appetito! ■

e Olio

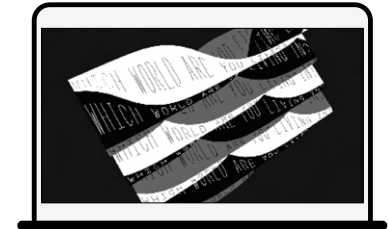


VCFA 10th Anniversary Publication Brainstorm

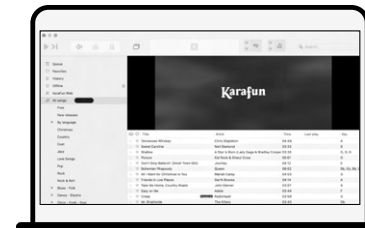
Free from quarantine, I had an extremely social weekend between meeting a handful of new friends and spending time with my own. I haven't met new people in a long time. I had a lot of great conversations about people's opinions on physical labor.

AIGA Eye on Design
Three Publishers Get Real About Independent Publishing
 Somnath Bhatt
 November 4, 2021

The Creative Independent
My website is a shifting house next to a river of knowledge. What could yours be?
 Laurel Schwulst
 May 21, 2018



SpaceTypeGenerator.com
 by Kiel Mutschelknaus

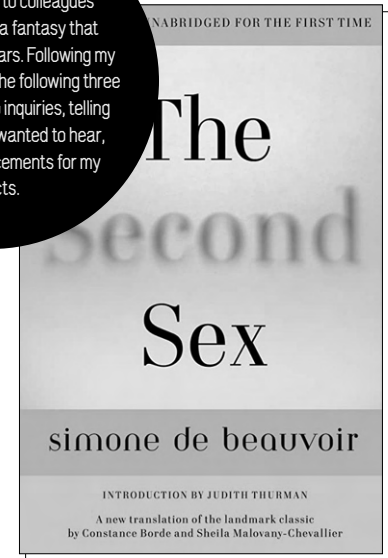


Karafun karaoke

I drafted a goodbye email to send off to colleagues at HBO—fulfilling a fantasy that I've harbored for years. Following my resignation, I spent the following three days responding to inquiries, telling people what they wanted to hear, and finding replacements for my projects.

Print Magazine
The 2022 PRINT Typography Report
 Meg Farmer
 December 12, 2021

Print Magazine
Typography: From Fixed to Fluid
 Dylan Mulvaney
 December 12, 2021



CNET

Richard Gurley
Drew, the man who
invented sticky tape

by Michelle Star
June 22, 2016

The New Yorker

The Year
in Vibes

Kyle Chayka
December 5, 2021

It's Nice That

Anna Mills on the
'human' quality of her
typography

by Elfie Thomas
December 17, 2021

Fast Company

The 7 most
overhyped
trends of
2022

Mark Wilson
December 27, 2021

Which mirror do you want to lick

La Doublure
WMDYWTL?

Which mirror do you want to lick?

Which mirror do you want to lick?

どの鏡を舐めたい?

いつか舐め鏡のど

Maki Suzuki / Abake: San Francisco, Which
Mirror Do You Want To Lick?

It's Nice That

Andrea Alfonso
Trabucco-Campos
utilises typography
as "a vehicle to
articulating identity

by Ruby Boddington
December 14, 2021

Fast Company

The Case for
Ugly Design

Andrea Trabucco-Campos
September 7, 2021



The New York Times
Magazine

The Age of
Anti-Ambition

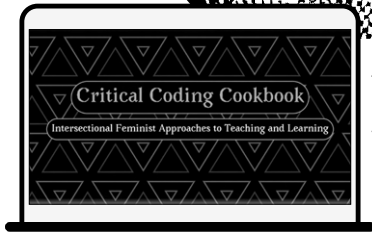
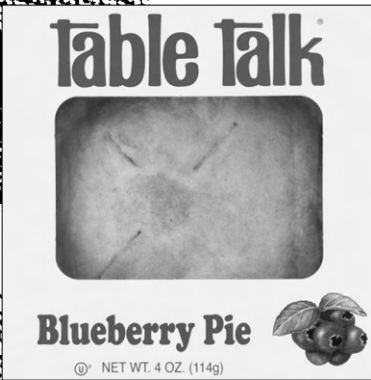
by Noreen Malone
February 15, 2022

**EXTRA
BOLD**

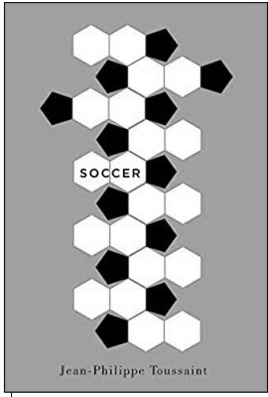
a feminist
inclusive
subversive
non-binary
field guide
for graphic
designers

ELLEN LUPTON
JENNIFER TOBIAS



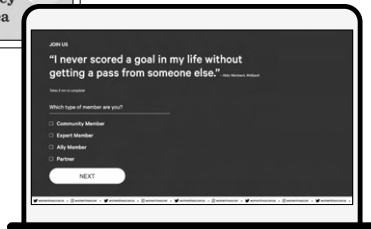


Critical Coding Cookbook

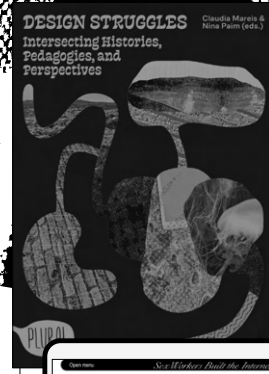


Bon Appetit
Fruit Stickers Are Better Art Than Anything Andy Warhol Ever Did
Alex Delany
February 27, 2018

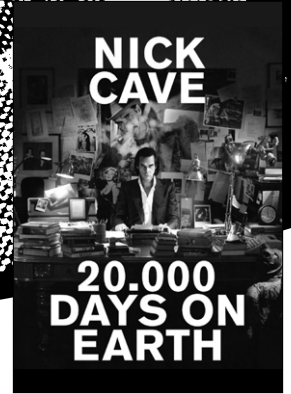
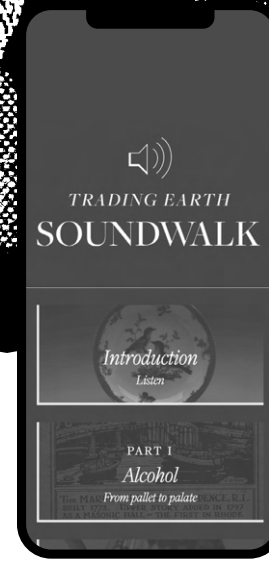
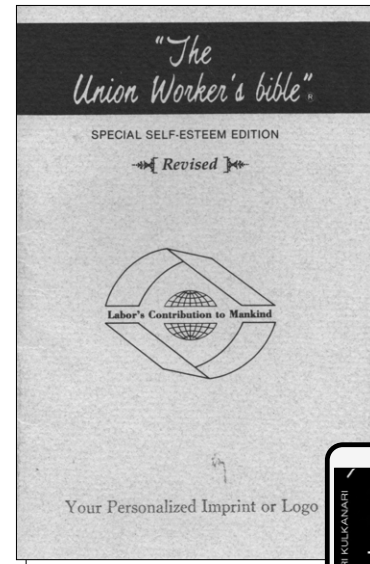
The New York Times
There's a Specific Kind of Joy We've Been Missing
Adam Grant
July 10, 2021



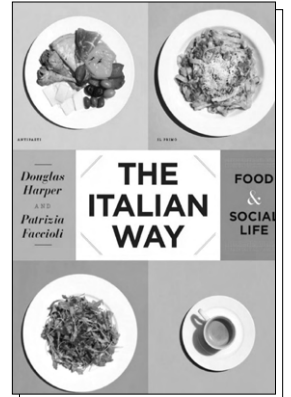
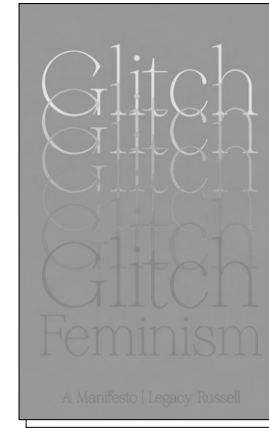
Women in Soccer



Sexworkersbuilttheinter.net by Livia Folds

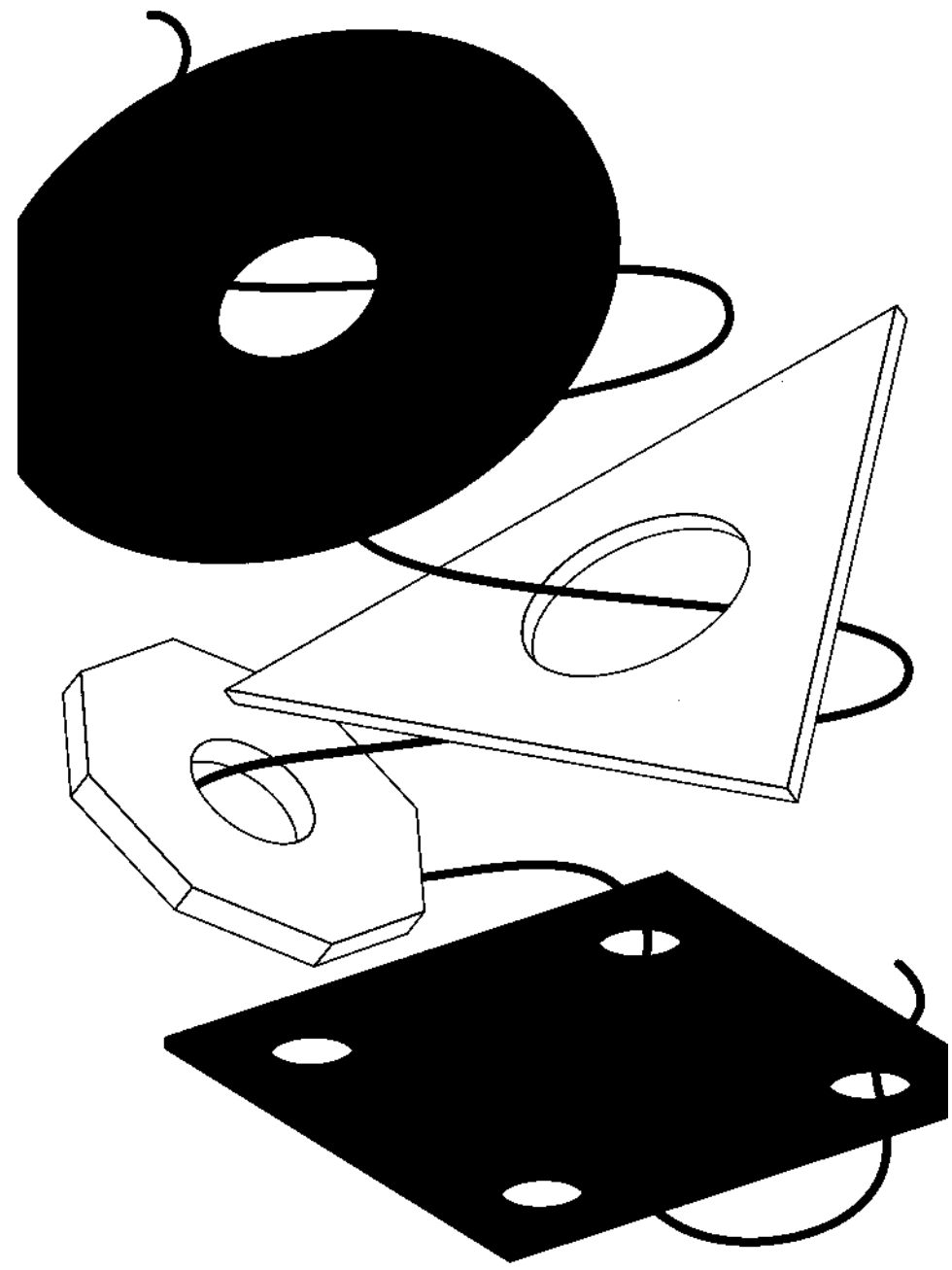


It's Nice That
Maggie Cowles' illustrations reflect daily life through a practice coined "food memory"
Lucy Bourton
August 17, 2021



Decolonizing Typography by Futuress

OHNO Blog
The Process of Swear
James Edmondson
November 16, 2021



Thank YouS

To my family: Mom and Dad for their endless love, support, and unsolicited opinions. Xavier, for saving me a seat. Rosa Maria and Jordi, for letting me leave multiple water glasses in every room. Matt, Julianne, Rachele, Eli, and Franc for letting me be super weird and still hanging out with me. Dave and Dorothy, for believing in me. Ralph and Sharon, for treating me like one of your own.

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To my advisors: Ziddi Msangi for helping me to observe and reflect on the places I find myself. Tasheka Arceneaux-Sutton for helping me go backwards and nurturing my craft. Dave Peacock for encouraging me to use my voice and have faith in my ideas. Ian Lynam for seeing me and helping me find power in who I am. I'm forever grateful to learn from each of you along with the wider faculty at VCFA. Thank you all for your guidance and letting me be me. You are my graphic design jedis.

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