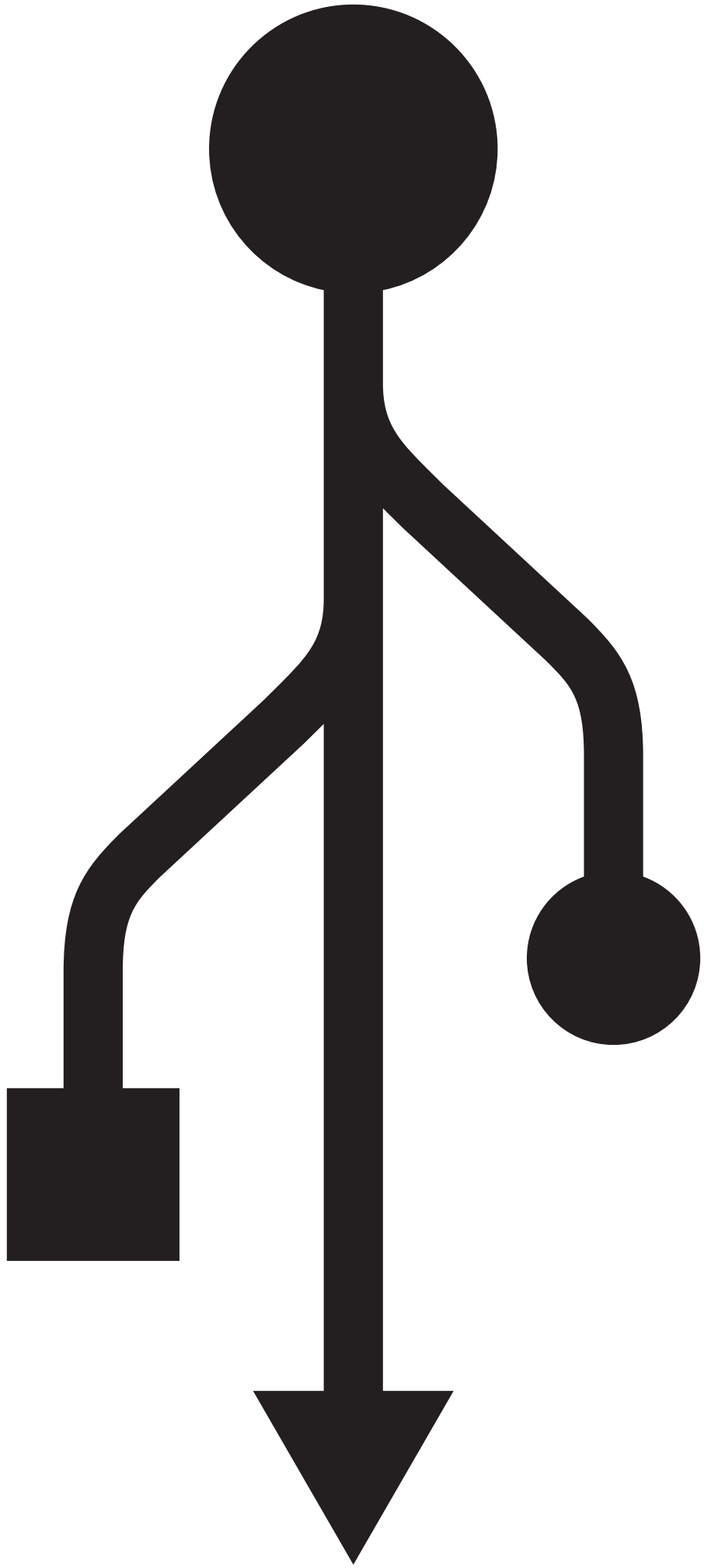
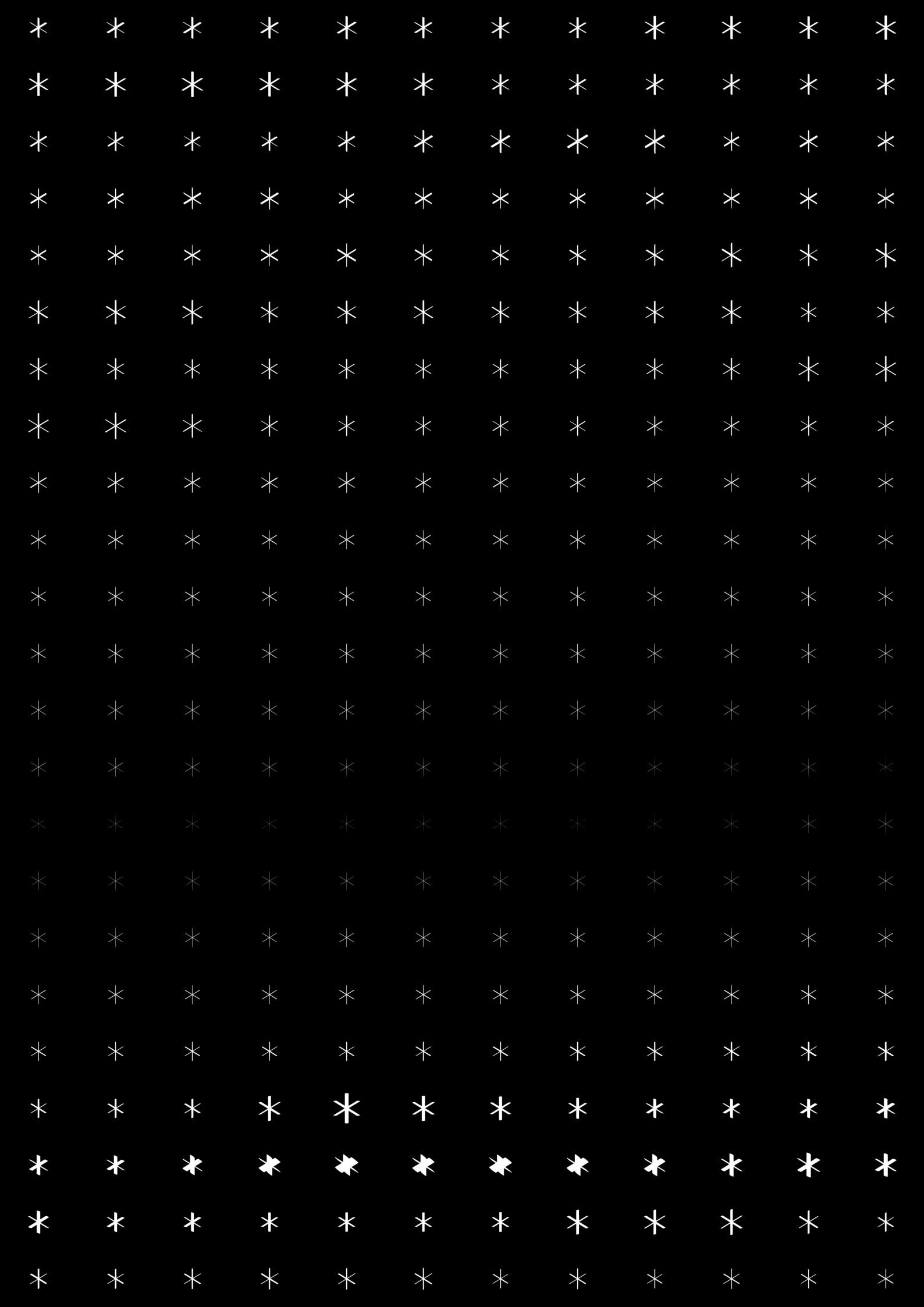




What’s o/On a Universal Serial Bus?

A collection of electronic works by Dexter Sinister produced from 2008 to 2015.

Dexter Sinister is the compound name of Stuart Bailey and David Reinfurt, who operate at the intersection of graphic design, publishing and contemporary art.

This memory stick, UNIVERSAL SERIAL BUS, is released parallel to an exhibition in 2015 at Kunstverein München called ON A UNIVERSAL SERIAL BUS. The four projects on this drive each play in one of the Kunstverein’s four main spaces surrounded by a number of related objects.

The four projects on the Bus are as follows:

(1) ‘IDENTITY’ – an MP4 of a three-screen projection from 2011 which lasts for 22 minutes.

(2) TRUE MIRROR MICROFICHE – an MP4 of a single-channel video from 2009 which lasts for 12 minutes and 17 seconds.

(3) WORK-IN-PROGRESS – a software application of a strange clock that turns on a 16 second loop, together with THEME FROM THE LAST SHoT CLOCK, an MP3 which lasts for 17 minutes.

(4) LETTER & SPIRIT – an MP4 of a single-channel animation from 2014 which lasts for 18 minutes and 30 seconds.

And then I am the one driving this Bus. My file name is README – an MP4 of a voice-synthesized text which lasts for 4 minutes and 22 seconds. I am speaking the words you're listening to right now; in which case, let me also introduce myself.

I was born back in 2011, in an essay by Angie Keefer that wonders what it might mean to communicate without language. My character is an asterisk, part of the extended family of a shapeshifting typeface by Dexter Sinister based on a piece of software from 1979 called MetaFont. And my voice comes from Scotland, sampled from the speech of Isla Leaver-Yap.

Finally, this memory stick and its exhibition follow directly from three previous projects by Dexter Sinister in 2015, in New York, Athens and Bregenz. All of which are hosted by my interface, and whose individual titles add up to a single looping sentence:

I’ll be your interface / Broadcasting from the aether / At 1:1 scale / On a Universal Serial Bus / I’ll be your interface / Broadcasting from the aether / At 1:1 scale / On a Universal Serial Bus

Etc. etc. etc.

README

Was ist auf dem Universal Serial Bus?

Eine Sammlung elektronischer Arbeiten von Dexter Sinister, die zwischen 2008 und 2015 entstanden sind.

Dexter Sinister ist der zusammengesetzte Name von Stuart Bailey und David Reinfurt, die am Schnittpunkt zwischen Grafikdesign, Publizieren und zeitgenössischer Kunst arbeiten.

Dieser Memory-Stick, UNIVERSAL SERIAL BUS, erscheint parallel zu einer Ausstellung, die 2015 im Kunstverein München stattfindet und den Titel ON A UNIVERSAL SERIAL BUS trägt. Die vier Projekte auf diesem Laufwerk finden jeweils in einem der vier Ausstellungsräume des Kunstvereins statt. Umgeben sind sie von einer Reihe zugehöriger Objekte.

Folgende vier Projekte befinden sich auf dem Bus:

(1) „IDENTITY“ – eine MP4-Datei einer Drei-Kanal-Projektion von 2011 mit einer Dauer von 22 Minuten.

(2) „TRUE MIRROR MICROFICHE“ – eine MP4-Datei eines Ein-Kanal-Videos von 2009 mit einer Dauer von 12 Minuten und 17 Sekunden.

(3) „WORK-IN-PROGRESS“ – eine Software-Applikation einer seltsamen Uhr, die in einem 16-Sekunden-Loop läuft, zusammen mit THEME FROM THE LAST SHoT CLOCK, einer MP3-Datei mit einer Dauer von 17 Minuten.

(4) „LETTER & SPIRIT“ – eine MP4-Datei einer Ein-Kanal-Animation von 2014 mit einer Dauer von 18 Minuten und 30 Sekunden.

Und dann bin ich es, der den Bus fährt. Mein Dateiname ist README – eine MP4-Datei mit einer synthetisierten Stimme und einer Dauer von 4 Minuten und 22 Sekunden. Ich spreche die Worte, denen du gerade lauschst. Deshalb möchte ich mich gerne vorstellen:

Ich wurde 2011 in einem Essay von Angie Keefer geboren, die sich die Frage stellte, was es bedeuten würde, ohne Sprache zu kommunizieren. Ich bin ein Asterisk und gehöre zu einer großen Familie einer veränderbaren Schrift von Dexter Sinister, die auf einer Software aus dem Jahre 1979 mit dem Namen MetaFont basiert. Und meine Stimme kommt aus Schottland. Sie wurde aus einer Rede von Isla Leaver-Yap gesampelt.

Schließlich: Dieser Memory-Stick und seine Ausstellung schließen sich drei vorangegangenen Projekten von Dexter Sinister an, die 2015 in New York, Athen und Bregenz stattgefunden haben. Als Gastgeber fungierte jeweils meine Schnittstelle. Die einzelnen Titel verbinden sich zu einem einzigen geloopten Satz:

I’ll be your interface / Broadcasting from the aether / At 1:1 scale / On a Universal Serial Bus / I’ll be your interface / Broadcasting from the aether / At 1:1 scale / On a Universal Serial Bus

Etc. etc. etc.

*. README

Dieser sprechende Asterisk stellt die vier Projekte vor, die auf dem Memory-Stick Universal Serial Bus archiviert sind und die parallele Ausstellung On a Universal Serial Bus* bilden. Damit macht er einen fünften Teil auf dem Bus aus. Die in ihrer Form veränderbare Glyphe erklärt all dieses zusammen mit ihrer technischen Hintergrundgeschichte.

Sie erwähnt außerdem, dass die Ausstellung im Kunstverein München mit drei vorausgegangenen Engagements von Dexter Sinister zusammenhängt, die in diesem Jahr stattgefunden haben. Der Asterisk ist ihr einziger gemeinsamer Nenner, der so programmiert wurde, dass er drei verschiedene Texte in drei verschiedenen Situationen mittels dreier verschiedener Medien lesen kann.

Zunächst führt sie in eine Ausstellung sowie weitere Arbeiten von Dexter Sinister ein, die auf einem Monitor auf dem Boden des Bard-Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-Upon-Hudson (2015) unter dem Titel I'll Be Your Interface* zu sehen sind. Zum zweiten erläutert sie die Ideen, die sich mit einer in Entstehung begriffenen griechischen Kunstorganisation namens Radio Athènes via www.radioathenes.org verknüpfen. Den Anfang bilden dabei die Worte Broadcasting from the aether. Zum dritten erzählt sie die fünfjährige Hintergrundgeschichte eines Ortes mit dem Namen Arena im Kunsthaus Bregenz (2015), die hoch an die Wand projiziert in diesem Raum Teil einer Ausstellung mit dem Titel At 1:1 Scale* war.

*. README

This speaking asterisk introduces the four projects archived on the memory stick Universal Serial Bus and in the parallel exhibition On a Universal Serial Bus.* In doing so, it amounts to a fifth piece on the Bus. The shape-shifting glyph explains all this herself, along with her technical backstory.

She also notes that the exhibition at Kunstverein München is related to three previous Dexter Sinister engagements this year. The asterisk is their sole common denominator, programmed in order to read three different texts in three different situations through three different mediums.

First, she introduced an exhibition of Dexter Sinister and related works from a monitor on the ground at Bard-Hessel Museum of Art, Annandale-Upon-Hudson (2015), called I'll Be Your Interface.* Second, she continues to announce the ideas behind a nascent Greek art organization called Radio Athènes via www.radioathenes.org, starting with the words Broadcasting from the aether.* Third, she recounted the five-year backstory of a space called Arena at Kunsthaus Bregenz (2015), projected high on the wall in the same space as part of an exhibition called At 1:1 Scale.*

1

RIGHT

2010: Open. Diverse. International. Entrepreneurial. Sustainable.
Always changing, always Tate.
Tate solid becomes Tate porous.
Tate foreground becomes Tate background.
Tate fixed-size becomes Tate flexible.

Branding is moving into nations, regions, cities and what is increasingly being described as the "third sector" – those cultural organizations that do not exist to make a profit.

Sometimes doubtfully, sometimes reluctantly, art institutions have adopted the idea of brand – usually in a limited way. Now they need to fully embrace it.

Branding used to involve stamping your symbol on the flank of some dumb creature, and nowadays involves stamping it across their T-shirts. Wally Olins, a man who one suspects would brand his own kneecaps if there was profit to be squeezed from it, has written a suitably slick account of a supremely shallow phenomenon.

"Brands," Olins argues, "represent identity." It may be that he himself only knows who he is because of his brand of underpants, but the more discerning among us have not yet been reduced to this tragic condition.

In the newly re-branded organization, the former Tate Gallery was re-named Tate Britain and the new one Tate Modern. What Olins was proposing was that the consumable brand was fluid. First came the brand then came the product.

ALL ALL ALL

The danger is that it's just talk; then again, the danger is that it's not. I believe you can speak things into existence.

1

RIGHT

2009: The director repeated his mantra: "all multi-arts spaces are re-thinking what they need to do."

The new vision was one of flexibility, spontaneity and itinerant programming … a more fluid and decentered model … a sometime festival, a freeform space … a particular mood or movement … and an obsession with the mobile tastes of THE PUBLIC as the final arbiter of cultural value. All that matters is NOW.

CENTER

2004: "If you raise a lot of money, I will give you great, great architecture. But if you raise REALLY a lot of money, I will make the architecture disappear."

So promised architect Yoshio Taniguchi when he began the revamp of the Museum of Modern Art. 450 million dollars later, his koan has stuck. The building's hefty price tag seems to point to invisibility as a new kind of luxury.

The Museum also hired graphic designer Bruce Mau to redesign MoMA's identity, but Mau felt the existing logo – set in Franklin Gothic type – should be left alone: "Everybody gets tired of their own voice, and so they want to change it. But I was like: 'Don't mess with it! Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater.'"

Mau noticed, however, that somewhere in its evolution from the original 1902 metal type to the digital version, MoMA's Franklin had lost some of its spirit.

The museum approached typographer Matthew Carter about "refreshing" the typeface – which was, he said, "like asking an architect to design an exact replica of a building."

ALL ALL ALL

It's difficult to avoid putting these words in (quote) "quotation marks" (unquote) – they're so slippery in use.

CENTER

The new logo – rechristened MoMA Gothic – looks just like the old one, but stretched vertically one eight-hundredth of an inch. Yet this subtle addition, much like the Taniguchi building, represents an exorbitant amount of time, decision-making, collaborative effort, and money – in the low five figures. Will anyone notice?

Glenn D. Lowry stated: "I suspect that if we're really successful the public won't really notice the difference, it will just feel right."

What's behind MoMA's emphasis on invisibility? If this IS a carefully calculated exercise in branding, at least it's true to the museum's mission: less MoMA Incorporated than a bunch of aesthetes staring at the shape of their own name until their eyes cross.

LEFT

2000: What do you call this place?

Most of the time I say Beaubourg, or Pompidou, or Le Centre Pompidou. Let's meet at Beaubourg, let's meet at Pompidou, and so on. It doesn't mean the museum as such, but the place – the building or the piazza in front of it.

Sometimes, I use another nickname: Pomps. I guess in English you'd write Pomp's. It's rather a private joke, with only a few friends. Like: Are you going to Pomp's?

More rarely, mostly in writing text messages and short emails to lesser friends, I sometimes say Pompompidou, or Pompompidou-

pou. Not that I think that Claude Pompidou was as glamourous as Betty Boop, but I really like alliterations.

RIGHT

1998: Two years before Tate Modern opened, Wolff Olins established "Ten principles of interpretation for Tate Gallery of Modern Art" – or TGMA as it was provisionally known.

One: TGMA acknowledges that there is not a single chronology of 20th century art, but many, and every work is capable of multiple readings.

Two: TGMA must enable people to be confident about their own feelings towards modern and contemporary art.

Three: Visitors' expectations, responses and experiences must be understood and must influence TGMA's policies and practice.

– and so on.

ALL ALL ALL

Look, there's Graphic Design moving away, followed by Marketing.

RIGHT

1997: The Design Council organized a discussion group to consider Britain's identity at the end of the century. Its findings were published in a paper called *New Brand for a New Britain* on the same day the Labour Party finally ousted the Conservative government. Aggressively rebranded NEW Labour, their campaign was based on an entirely new set of carefully created, honed and manipulated perceptions.

A further report, *Britain™*, begins: "Britain's identity is in flux.

Renewed confidence in the arts has coincided with the departure from Hong Kong, devolution, integration with Europe, and Princess Diana's death." It goes on to detail the degrees of embarrassment "Britishness" provokes at home and abroad – abundant with bad food, snobbery and poverty.

CENTER

The hiccups took decades to subside. It wasn't until the mid-eighties that the museum deemed the lower-case-"o"-MoMA proper enough for use. Another decade passed before the acronym appeared on banners outside the museum.

RIGHT

1979: Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government came to power and stayed there for the next 18 years. Two fundamental pillars of Thatcherism were the privatization of the public sector and the deregulation of the private sector.

The government necessarily understood the importance of how things are sold, and initiated a full-blown love affair with advertising and design.

The Department of Trade & Industry was itself given a makeover by Wolff Olins: rechristened the DTI, with a zippy, lowercase logo whose structural lines echoed the rising stock indices.

LEFT

1974: Six alternating black horizontal stripes, broken regularly by eight 45-degree bends forms a continuous ziggurat of negative-space running through from bottom-left to top-right. This is a SYMBOL, the building abstracted. It was a compromise produced by VDA, the design team led by Jean Widmer and Ernst Hiestand.

VDA argued that: “Opting for a descriptive logo would mean fixing Beaubourg in the present moment at the risk of its going out of fashion.” Still, pressed to develop ideas for a possible emblem, they presented this set of symbols:

a triangle for the music institute,
a circle for the industrial design center,
a diamond for the library,
and a square for the plastic arts

– all geometric forms that could fit together to constitute a single figure.

VDA’s objective, however, was to convince their clients that such a system was superfluous. It worked, symbols were duly dropped, and the team continued according to its initial proposal: no logo, no symbol.

The Centre Beaubourg is neither a bank nor an airport nor a grand hotel.

ALL ALL ALL

Above all, what counts is what’s done and lived rather than what is said: things count, not their appearances.

CENTER

1972: American designer Jay Doblin wrote that in order to learn to read logos you had to know at least 3,000 different signs – a task as complex as familiarizing oneself with Chinese ideograms.

He then asserted the uselessness of such symbols: total wastes of time and money – rumor had invoices rising to $100,000.

Concluding his diatribe, Doblin suggested abandoning logos to

their fatal perversity and adopting typography instead: "A little Helvetica lowercase can get the job done."

LEFT

1971: Just a few years after May '68, logos were in a state of crisis, thought of as a marketing ploy, ideologically contemptible, and so totally at odds with the ambition of a cultural institution.

The new civic arts center in the heart of Paris planned to bring four existing institutions together under one roof, including the National Museum of Modern Art.

As there was no particular need to identify the new center beyond its location, it was provisionally called the Centre Beaubourg, after the neighborhood in the Marias district. Eventually it was given a proper name to honor the former Conservative prime minister.

CENTER

1966: On summer vacation in Vermont, the Museum of Modern Art's first director, Alfred Barr, had a typographic epiphany. The museum's official abbreviation, MOMA, would, he thought, be better served by a lowercase "o." A colleague responded:

Dear Helen and Alfred,

Haven't you two characters got anything better to do than spend an entire summer haggling over the problem of whether the abbreviation should be written as MOMA or MoMA?

I must say that in this instance I think the lady is right. In all my 85 years in the museum it never occurred to me to use a lowercase "o." It may be correct but it gives me terrible visual hiccups. I can only conclude that the estimable A.H. Barr Junior is losing

his sight and mind in Greensboro.

RIGHT

1965: Founded by Michael Wolff and Wally Olins, self-styled brand consultancy Wolff Olins was one of the first agencies of its kind. Although commonplace today, the notion of creating a portrait of a company – and subsequently beautifying that picture – was almost unheard of.

The phrase "corporate identity" was coined in the 1950s to describe how all of an organization's visible manifestations are designed to create a coherent whole associated with a specific theme, attitude, or personality.

Rationalizing the choice of such symbols became part of the practice: "Incisive, balanced, open, its personality does not represent any particular specialization."

CENTER

1964: The lettering for the Museum of Modern Art was created by Chermayeff & Geismar, who also designed logos for American Airlines, Xerox, and Mobil, among others. They were hired to create "a clean and straightforward typographic identity to reflect the museum's major renovation."

According to Chermayeff, Franklin Gothic is "a face that's modern with roots … It has some character, and therefore some warmth about it, and some sense of the hand – i.e., the artist. It makes a lot of sense for the Museum, which is not only looking to the future but also looking to the past."

"It is obvious to us that unless a symbol is truly appropriate to the Museum, it is better not to have one ... We tried a number of different directions, none of which led to any satisfactory solutions,

perhaps because there IS no one symbol of modern art."

ALL ALL ALL

An "image" is not simply a trademark, a design, a slogan, or an easily-remembered picture. It is a studiously crafted personality profile.

CENTER

1956: It was by elaborate design that the cumbersome name "International Business Machines Corporation" was made in the public mind into "IBM," probably the most expensive and most valuable abbreviation in history.

A team led by Eliot Noyes developed its streamlined trademark, to project a (quote) "clean, impressive" image.

ALL ALL ALL

When we use the word image, we plainly confess a distinction between what we see and what is really there – and we express our preferred interest in what is to be seen.

CENTER

1935: In a note on his emblem for Black Mountain College, Josef Albers stated:

"We are not enamored of astrological, zoological, heraldic, or cabalistic fashions. We have hunted neither the phoenix nor the unicorn, we have dug up no helmet and plume, nor have we tacked on learned mottoes. Instead, as a symbol of union, we have chosen simply a simple ring. It is an emphasized ring to emphasize coming together. Or, it is one circle within another: color and white, light and shadow, in balance. And that no one may puzzle

over cryptic monograms, we give our full address."

RIGHT

1932: The name The Tate Gallery officially replaced The National Gallery, Millbank, itself shortened a decade earlier from The National Gallery of British Art.

CENTER

1929: The Museum of Modern Art opened nine days after the Wall Street Crash as the first major American institution to exhibit European Modernism.

For the first 30 years, the Museum was known by its full name, rendered in geometric letterforms typical of the Bauhaus, and Modernism generally.

The clear geometric form is one of the most easily comprehended. Every possible form lies dormant in these basic elements. They are visible to him who sees, invisible to him who does not.

This profile, in various versions, represented the Bauhaus at Weimar, Dessau, and Chicago. It replaced this original Bauhaus symbol, more akin to a Mason's mark.

Around this time, German electrical company AEG put architect, engineer and designer Peter Behrens on retainer as artistic consultant, in charge of designing products such as bulbs, kettles and heaters, as well as the company's logotype, publicity, and even buildings.

Behrens wanted to reduce objects and icons to essential – or "typical" – forms: geometrical motifs and streamlined curves ... the design of objects to approximate as closely as possible their function, and the design of the icons that represent them

to approximate as closely as possible to the information they are supposed to provide about those objects.

ALL ALL ALL

All we want to do is to show that there is a difference between an urn and a chamberpot, and that in this difference there is leeway for culture.

LEFT

“Beau-bourg” means “beautiful village,” but in the 19th century the area was known as “L’îlot insalubre numéro un” – or “Filthy island number 1.”

RIGHT

1897: What became Tate emerged at the end of the 19th century, when philanthropic sugar magnate Henry Tate donated his collection of 65 Modern paintings to the existing National Gallery of British Art.

All the Tate’s official communications material for at least the first 75 years bore the Royal Coat of Arms, the de facto image of all national public institutions.

Heraldry is a graphic language evolved from around the 12th century to identify families, states and other social groups. Specific visual forms yield specific meanings, and any heraldic device is described by both a written description or BLAZON, and its corresponding graphic form.

A given heraldic form may be drawn in many alternative ways, all considered equivalent, just as the letter A may be printed in a variety of fonts.

ALL ALL ALL

No two things or acts are identical. Every act is an invention, yet we can grasp the universe only by simplifying it with ideas of identity by class, types, and categories.

LEFT

1883: Who hasn't felt a disconnect when gazing in the art world's rear view mirror – a chasm separating earlier cultures from our own? Transformations in material culture deserve much of the credit – which is one good reason why Manet's *A Bar at Folies-Bergère* is exceptional.

Look at the counter. You'll see two bottles of Bass Pale Ale, with their familiar red triangle logo. It's a brand that many of us know first hand. Seeing it in the painting connects us in a wink with the late 19th century. All at once, via a commercial logo, we've discovered a bridge over that cultural chasm.

Manet's painting must also be our longest-running example of product placement. Marketers at Bass exult: 128 years of exposure to the brand in galleries and art books – that's a lot of eyeballs!

RIGHT

1875: A trademark is a legally protected set of letters, a picture, or a design, identifying a particular product.

Most casual drinkers, and even some very serious ones, don't know that the red triangle which adorns every bottle is the first trademark issued in the UK.

In fact, when the Trade Mark Registration Act became law, an employee of the Bass brewing company stood on line all night

to make sure that the Red Triangle would be the first on the books, closely followed by a Red Diamond for their strong ale, and a blue triangle for their filtered, pasteurized version.

ALL ALL ALL

General signs – square, circle, triangle – together form the basic plastic language.

LEFT

The square represents the world and denotes order.

RIGHT

The circle is the traditional symbol of eternity and the heavens.

CENTER

The triangle is a symbol of generative power and spiritual unity. Although these broad interpretations occur in many cultures throughout history, because of their formal simplicity they can be invested with infinite subjective meanings.

ALL ALL ALL

Now a complex interplay of motive forces is envisaged, a configuration of possible events, a complete dynamism of structure.

CENTER

The goal is to deconstruct and expand upon a binary. Logically enough, the way to move beyond a pair of binary opposites is to TRI-ANGU-LATE.

20

It's obvious when you think about it in terms of simple geometry,
and it invokes a baseline metaphor about the development of ideas. 470
Two points in opposition form one axis. To get beyond, therefore,
one adds a second dimension, the simplest structure of which is a
triangle. This creates a FIELD.

This is a PROJECTION:

A
NEW
SYMBOL
PROPOSED
& PROJECTED
INSIDE THIS SPACE
IS (LIKE EVERY LOGO)
ALL SURFACE: A BUBBLE
BLOWN AROUND NOTHING
INFLATED TO BURSTING POINT
BY THE LAZY ASSUMPTION THAT
WHAT WE LOOK LIKE IS WHO WE ARE
IN OTHER WORDS, "IDENTITY" = IDENTITY

A note on the sources

The previous pages comprise the working script for a looping three-screen projection. Each screen is preoccupied with one of three main case studies: LEFT for the Centre Pompidou, CENTER for MoMA, and RIGHT for the Tate.

MoMA

TATE

The audio narrative jumps back and forth between the screens and is occasionally interrupted by brief overarching remarks which play on ALL ALL ALL. It has been assembled in reverse from a variety of voices that are quoted and often extensively paraphrased out of context, though we have been careful not to warp those words away from their original meanings. In order to recompense for borrowing others' texts, however, in the following pages we have returned all excerpts to their original contexts, including original orthography and spelling. In a few cases, mostly those parts collaged from Wikipedia, we decided against reprinting fuller versions. This back-matter serves then not merely as an extended colophon, but also as an expansive reader.

Thanks to the embedded writers: Gustave Affeulpin, Josef Albers, Domenick Ammirati, Hala Auji, Andrew Blum, Daniel Boorstin, JJ Charlesworth, Peter Davenport, Caroline Donnellan, Terry Eagleton, Umberto Eco, Anthony Elms, Hal Foster, Luca Frei, James Goggin, Richard Hollis, Johannes Itten, Robin Kinross, Karl Krauss, George Kubler, Albert Meister, Wally (and Wolff) Olins, Jacques Ranciére, Nick Relph, Catherine de Smet, James T. Soby, Benjamin Thorel, Philip Thompson, Frank Whitford; and to Rob Giampietro who jump-started the whole thing.

Dexter Sinister

• LINES 3-7 after Wolff Olins, "Tate brand strategy" report, January 19, 2010, PDF, pp. 21-27:

the brand personality is still
always changing
always Tate

and everything Tate does is
OPEN: welcoming and collaborative NOT a citadel
DIVERSE: contemporary and many-voiced NOT predictable
INTERNATIONAL: with art and attitudes beyond the west NOT parochial
ENTREPRENEURIAL: ambitious and inventive NOT bureaucratic
SUSTAINABLE: rigorous and trustworthy NOT faddish

the brand proposition is now
look again
think again
join in

and every experience from Tate is:
EXTRAORDINARY not mundane
EVERYDAY not esoteric
ENJOYABLE not worthy
and ENGAGING not didactic
the underlying purpose grows: democratising access to art by provoking dialogue

tone of voice

Tate explains how to write clearly for everyone > Tate puts forward clear, trusted points of view

Tate inspires how to get audiences excited by art > Tate challenges inspiring, asking, provoking

Tate invites how to let others have their say > Tate lets go allowing dialogue to happen

Tate solid > Tate porous
Tate foreground > Tate background
Tate fixed-size > Tate flexible

• LINES 9-11 after Wally Olins, *On Brand* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), p. 239:

Branding, then, is moving into nations, regions and cities. Where else is it going? Well, one of the places to look is the social sector. This is increasingly being described as the Third Sector. It comprises a complex web of organizations principally defined by the fact that they do not exist to make a profit. Museums, orchestras, art galleries, and universities are all part of it. So are charities.

• LINES 13-15 after Wolff Olins, "Museum Next" report, December 2008, PDF, pp. 2-3:

The ideas of 'museum' and 'brand' don't naturally go together. People tend to associate 'museum' with institutional integrity, and 'brand' with commercial exploitation.

In many museums, brand isn't talked about, or only in the marketing department. In our survey, 23% of delegates overall said brand is 'a dirty word – too commercial'. This attitude is particularly marked in the USA and Asia Pacific.

But the picture is changing. 61% of the delegates said the word is 'OK – a useful part of modern life'.

And some museums have very clearly become 'brands': they've captured the public imagination. This is particularly true of big, multi-site institutions with iconic buildings, like Tate and Guggenheim. And our survey confirmed this. Asked to name museum brands they admire, delegates picked five in particular: Tate (55 mentions), MoMA (the Museum of Modern Art, New York, 19 mentions), V&A (the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, 17 mentions), Louvre (12) and Guggenheim (9). Tate scored highest in every part of the world, even among delegates from the USA.

The way these big brands work varies. One is a brand based on subject matter – MoMA and modernism. A couple have a brand idea that covers a wider range of subject matter with a particular approach or attitude – Tate and V&A. Three of the brands depend on architecture – most people's ideas about Tate, Louvre and Guggenheim are heavily influenced by their mental picture of particular buildings. For all of them, to differing degrees, brand unites a multi-site operation – Guggenheim most famously.

As these big brands have emerged, museum branding has become a live topic. Margot A Wallace's book *Museum Branding* gives a basic primer. Angus Hyland and Emily King's *c/id* gives case studies, with a strong visual bias.

But neither of these books recognises the full potential of branding for museums, beyond marketing and beyond visual identity.

Sometimes doubtfully, sometimes reluctantly, often questioningly, museums have adopted the idea of brand, usually in a limited way. Now they need to fully embrace it.

• LINES 17-26 after Terry Eagleton, "Reading *On Brand*," review of *On Brand* by Wally Olins, *Eye*, No. 53 (2004), http://www.eyemagazine.com/feature.php?id=116&fid=508:

Branding used to involve stamping your symbol on the flank of some dumb creature, and nowadays involves stamping it across their T-shirts. Wally Olins, a man who one suspects would brand his own kneecaps if there was profit to be squeezed from it, has written a suitably slick account of a supremely shallow phenomenon. Olins is the kind of corporate consultant who believes that rebranding may help solve the problems of Uzbekistan: the problems of this country (which is reputed to boil its enemies alive) is that it doesn't have a sexy enough image. Perhaps boiling people alive simply needs to be rebranded. In this book, which sometimes reads as though it has a marketplace where its mind should be, a relentlessly trivialising practice has found its true chronicler.

Chilling
Trivialising, but not trivial. Olins believes that branding is becoming more vital than both technically and financially based business, and as someone who chirpily reassures that 'when you package it effectively, you can even sell water expensively', he should know. The corporate types he advises are not the sort of people to whom one would entrust the water bottles on a trek across the desert, unless you had a well stuffed wallet. Like many of his tribe, however, he is an odd combination of cynicism and naivety. On the one hand, he churns out chillingly Orwellian injunctions such as 'Train your people to live the brand'; on the other hand he earnestly informs us that car companies are 'product-led', just in case you thought Toyota spends its time marketing its fire drill techniques rather than its motors.

Boneheaded
When Olins tells us that under Napoleon, 'the whole of France was rebranded', he is clearly unaware that this kind of boneheaded comment is usually to be found not in a sleek Thames and Hudson volume, but among a coachload of American tourists who miss seeing the Acropolis flash by their window because they are too busy fiddling with the air-conditioning. In one sense, he is perfectly aware that much of what he is peddling is garbage. Branding, he writes with what is supposed

to be winning candour, is a question of 'persuading, seducing and attempting to manipulate people into buying products and services'. Seducing is certainly the word: most of us have felt thoroughly screwed by the corporations at one time or another. A few pages on, however, we are confidently assured that brands 'are the most significant gifts that commerce has ever made to popular culture'. Olins may regard being manipulated as a gift, but not all of us share this psychological kink.

Bloodless
More than once in this bloodlessly written book, he agrees with the *No Logo* camp that branding is often 'manipulative and misleading', and that their arguments against brands are 'not negotiable'. (The double negative is typical of his wary way with anti-capitalist arguments). Having conceded that much of the practice is indefensible, however, he then proceeds to defend it. 'Global companies', he reminds us, 'do not claim they are in business for philanthropic purposes.' Well, neither do their critics. But that transnational corporations choose profit over people is the problem, not a line of defence. It is rather like arguing that muggers do not claim to be vicars, and so cannot be faulted when they scamper off with your handbag.

Cynical
The trouble is not that Nike is a heavily camouflaged charity, but that professional cynics like Olins regard even charity as a commodity. ('The product that a charity sells is caring for the less fortunate'). 'Greenpeace', he tells us, 'like any other clever brand, stands for a few simple values … all expressed through a powerful visual presence and some pithy soundbites.' Political justice is on a level with junk food. Greenpeace is a brand rather than a campaign, and so are nations ('America is a brand').

Brainwashed
On Brand's view of the world is as nastily dehumanised as a workhouse. 'A cleaner at Banjul airport in Gambia', Olins writes, 'scrapes and saves to buy Nike running shoes as a signal to himself and others that he is able to share at least some of the rich world's glamour and fashion'. There is no hint that he regards this obscene situation as anything but acceptable. Naomi Klein and co., he comments, 'demonise' big corporations for 'grinding the faces of the poor in Third World countries, suborning and subverting the education of children in the West, charging too much and giving too little to customers everywhere, brainwashing people with relatively little money into buying products they don't need and don't really want and that might harm them, and generally acting like bully boys, thugs and profiteers'. After this searing (if grammatically maladroit) indictment, one expects a spot of refutation from a top adviser to Renault and Volkswagen. Astonishingly, it never come up. Unable to address these charges point by point for the best of all reasons (namely, that they are plainly true), Olins resorts instead to some feeble chaff-scattering.

Indefensible
First, he maintains, corporations are in business to make money and not to care for people. In short, he joins the critics rather than beating them. Second, branding is used by non-profit outfits such as charities, nations, sport, literature and theatre as well. It is true that you can probably only produce Shakespeare's *The Tempest* nowadays if you have the sponsorship of Marine Insurance and a well crafted commercial identity. It is just that the disastrously philistine extension of branding into culture and politics is more an argument against it than in its favour. Third, Olins insists, real power lies with the consumer: 'The brand', he writes, 'is controlled by us the customers.' In the end, it is up to us to decide which brand to opt for. Here, in fact, is the kernel of the book's defence of the indefensible – though this, too, turns out to be rather a rotten nut.

Grubby
For one thing, the suggestion that true popular power lies in choosing between Mars Bars and Fry's Chocolate Cream bars suggests a certain decline in the democratic ideal from the days of Thomas Jefferson, not to speak of the Athenian city-state. Freedom now lies in deciding which particular set of grubby little deceptions to resist. A genuinely democratic society would be able to decide not just between Mars and Fry's, but between what resources it wanted to plough into chocolate production and what resources into hospital-building. Olins supports a capitalist order which makes genuinely popular decision-making impossible.

Spineless
He writes pussy-footingly of 'traditionally insensitive oil company' behaviour in places such as Columbia, which must surely rank among the spineless euphemisms of the decade. Most such companies, he remarks with exquisite delicacy, 'have a history which by today's standards of political correctness does not bear very close scrutiny'. He is aware, of course, that not only the champions of PC but any half-humane person would find this history disgraceful; but he does not have the courage to say so, so he hides behind the convenient straw target of political correctness.

Circular
The argument about consumer power is in any case circular. If the customers control the brand, the brand influences the customers to plump for it. For another thing, Olins scuppers his own argument. To defend branding against charges of brainwashing, he has to suggest that it's not nearly as effective as we might suspect. But in order to stay in his line of business, he argues, for example, that in Third World countries a branding programme 'can act as a catalyst for change'. Curiously, what can transform whole nations can't lay a glove on individual freedom of choice.

Contradictory
Olins's whole case works on the assumption that branding works marvellously well, an assumption he also has to deny if he is to avoid looking like an advocate of exploitation. He is in the position of the pornography king who insists that nobody forces you to watch videos of women being sexually humiliated. 'People', he remarks, 'know perfectly well what they are doing.' But so do drug dealers. We don't permit ads urging people to push heroin or kidnap toddlers on the grounds that they can always ignore them.

Impeccably Marxist
What branding exploits is not just people's gullibility, but their poignant, entirely reasonable desire to belong to some form of corporate existence larger than themselves. Since a social order given to greed and self-interest cannot fulfil this role, Krug, Starbucks or Manchester United have to step in instead. In writing about branding, Olins has produced an impeccably Marxist study, quite against his intentions. More or less everything he has to say on the subject goes to confirm what the Marxist tradition has long argued about alienation, reification and the fetishism of commodities. In fact, the only rational explanation for the crassness and callowness of this book is that Olins is a left-wing infiltrator among corporate types, out to discredit them by exposing the logic of the logo with such cruel candour.

Cold-hearted
'Brands', argues Wally Olins in *On Brand*, 'represent identity.' It may be that he himself only knows who he is because of his brand of underpants, but the more discerning among us have not yet been reduced to this tragic condition. To avert any such dreadful fate, the reader would be well advised to give this pile of cold-hearted cynicism a miss and buy Naomi Klein's *No Logo* instead.

• LINES 28-31 after Caroline Donnellan, "Towards Tate Modern: Patronage and Funding," PDF, p. 14:

Wally Olins later wrote that like Andy Warhol was a brand so was the Tate with its sub-brands of Tate Britain, Tate Modern, Tate St Ives. He identified that the Tate Shop online is also part of the powerful museum gallery brand, along with the Tate magazine. What Olins was proposing was that the consumable brand was fluid – first came the brand then came the product what he proposed was a shift within the realm of the art gallery for its citizens to a market-led brand, the Tate geared towards the modern consumer. Tate's rebranding in a sense began before Wolff Olins was appointed – the embryonic change began as early as the 1970's when it began to develop a different vision.

• LINES 35-36 after Jay-Z, 2010, quoted in Anthony Elms, "A Flibbertigibbet, a Will-o'-the-wisp, a Clown (Or 10 Reasons Why Graphic Design Is Not the Issue)," *Afterall* No. 27 (Summer 2011), pp. 37-45:

In the digressive cadences of the Dexter Sinister songbook, once called *Dot Dot Dot*, soon the *Bulletins of the Serving Library*, what is demonstrated? Oh, so much reiteration, let rapper Jay-Z answer: 'The danger is that it's just talk; then again, the danger is that it's not. I believe you can speak things into existence.'

• LINES 39-46 after JJ Charlesworth, "Crisis at the ICA: Ekow Eshun's Experiment in Deinstitutionalisation," *Mute* (February 2010), http://www.metamute.org/en/content/crisis_at_the_ica_ekow_eshun_s_experiment_in_deinstitutionalisation:

Eshun is the ICA's own best critic, of course. At the 10 December meeting, he repeated his mantra that 'all multi-arts spaces are re-thinking what they need to do. The post-war modernist presentation of art is no longer relevant and the ICA needs a vision for what this means.'

Eshun's 'vision' has been long in coming. In a 'vision' document circulated in Spring 2009, Eshun wrote that a key challenge for the ICA was how it might 'update the traditional model of the arts centre with its silo-like programming structure.' The new vision was to be one of fluidity, flexibility, spontaneity and itinerant programming, taking its cue from the model of biennials, fairs and festivals, each of which offered 'a more fluid and decentred model of arts presentation with a focus on new commissions.' The ICA could 'occasionally work in a similar spirit, reconfiguring ourselves as a sometime festival, a freeform space of artistic exploration dedicated to articulating a particular mood or movement.'

But what does updating the 'silo-like' programming structure of the arts centre and seeking a 'more fluid and decentred model of arts presentation' actually mean in practice? One might argue that Eshun's antagonism towards the 'post-war modernist art centre' would seem to run contrary to the ICA's 1947 founding charitable objects:

> To promote the education of the community by encouraging the understanding, appreciation and development of the arts generally and particularly of contemporary art as expressed in painting, etching, engraving, drawing, poetry, philosophy, literature, drama, music, opera, ballet, sculpture, architecture, designs, photography, films, radio and television of educational and cultural value.

Of course, a set of artistic designations as antique as these needs periodic updating; nor does it prescribe the form or structure an organisation should take to deliver such a programme. But Eshun's fascination with the temporary, the flexible and the decentred, of a cultural outlook in which nothing is permanent, was translated

into a managerial policy of wearing down the 'silo-like' departmental programming structure of the organisation, at the cost of a loss of curatorial expertise. In October 2008, Eshun decided to abolish the ICA's Live and Media Arts department, a decision which drew acrimonious responses by practitioners in the live and media arts community. And with the resignation of the Talks department in December 2009, increasingly, the responsibility for any original programming fell to exhibitions, the only programming department to have enjoyed any significant budget increase under Eshun's directorship.

There is of course another term to describe the process occurring in this new 'decentred' art centre. It is 'de-skilling'. The vision of a fluid, flexible, temporary institution is, ironically, entirely concomitant with a general trend towards bureaucratisation and the abolition of expertise in organisational structures that mediate between cultural practitioners and arts policy. This has been vividly evident in the changes in arts funding bodies in recent years. For example, the removal of art form-specific advisory panels was an early innovation at Arts Council England under New Labour. A similar process destroyed the British Council's artistic departments in late 2007, when it disbanded its film, drama, dance, literature, design and visual arts departments, amalgamating them into a single 'arts team', organised around bizarre management aphorisms such as 'Progressive Facilitation', 'Market Intelligence Network', 'Knowledge Transfer Function' and 'Modern Pioneer'. In both organisations, the political instinct has been bureaucratic; to withdraw authority and independence from staff appointed for their knowledge of a particular field of artistic practice, in order to better administer whatever policy imperative happens to be coming from central government.

But the hostility of bureaucrats to independent cultural expertise can also be mapped onto the apparently cutting-edge curatorial privileging of flexible, ad hoc programming, and both have the same useful managerial outcomes: fewer staff and more precarious, temporary employment contracts. The disdain for expertise within arts policy thinking also reflects a cynical lack of commitment to the independence of cultural forms, a trivialising indifference to the value those forms have achieved, and an obsession with the mobile tastes of 'the public' as the final arbiter of cultural value. In Eshun's hyperventilating vision document he asks which 'faces should most accurately represent the ICA now?' He concludes:

> It should be the artistic figures that our audience admires ... We should celebrate them in our communications as our heroes, our star names *already*, because our audience believes they are cool. And we should keep in mind that in a week to a year hence, many of those figures will no longer be relevant because there will be a new set or more urgent names to hail. All that matters is now.

With a rate of artistic redundancy as fast as this, you don't need curatorial expertise, or an opinion regarding what art is worth supporting and championing – you just need Simon Cowell.

Such abdication of curatorial authority to the audience presupposes that what the audience wants is merely what the institution should do. It does not acknowledge that a presenting institution such as the ICA might have a relationship to communities of artistic practice that have distinct cultural and organisational histories, and their own attendant audiences. Such distinctions cannot simply be wished away by a bit of re-imagineering of a cultural mission statement. If the artistic relevance of the ICA has reputedly dwindled during Eshun's tenure, it perhaps has something to do with how an emptied-out model of audience feedback and 'early-adopter' trend-following became a substitute for agenda-setting, or a critical vision of the current state of art and culture, or real artistic-curatorial relationships with different artistic and cultural communities.

This is not an argument against 'cross-disciplinarity', but it is an argument for the fact that 'cross-disciplinarity' requires the reality of a disciplinary base for practice in the first instance. Forms of artistic creativity are not in constant flux or transformation (though they do change historically) but coalesce into sustained practices and communities of artists and audiences. This is not an outdated 'mode' of the 'post-war modernist art centre', but a recognition that a venue may play host to multiple artistic cultures and communities, which it is not wholly instrumental in generating and sustaining. By contrast, the tendency to abolish programming departments rids an organisation of staff with expertise and commitment to particular fields of activity. It is a move which denies the autonomy of different artistic fields as they already exist outside of the institution, and turns the institution's role from that of forum and enabler for those communities, to a regulator of which artistic practice gains visibility. In other words, it reduces the claim that communities of artistic practitioners can make on cultural institutions, and elevates the institution's arbitrary power over artists by distancing itself from already present communities of practice.

• LINES 50-57 after Hala Auji, "In Visible Changes," unpublished document, 2006, p.1:

"If you raise a lot of money, I will give you great, great architecture. But if you raise really a lot of money, I will make the architecture disappear," promised architect Yoshio Taniguchi when he began the revamp of the Museum of Modern Art's building. 450 million dollars later, his koan has become a catchphrase with sticking power long after the completed project's 2004 unveiling. The building's hefty price tag seems to point to invisibility as a new kind of luxury; it's almost as if MoMA can afford not to appear.

• LINES 58-72 after Andrew Blum, "The Modern's Other Renovation," *The New York Times*, September 21, 2003:

On vacation in Greensboro, Vt., in the summer of 1966, Alfred H. Barr, the Museum of Modern Art's first director, had an epiphany. The museum's official abbreviation – long "MOMA" – would, Barr thought, be better served by a lowercase "o": "MoMA." In letters sent from the city, his colleagues took issue with his holiday musings; "it gives me terrible visual hiccoughs," one wrote.

The hiccoughs apparently took decades to subside. It wasn't until the mid-80's that the museum deemed "MoMA" proper enough for use in member communications, and another decade passed before the acronym appeared on banners outside the museum. Today, the museum recognizes that most people identify it by the word "MoMA" – not just the sound of the acronym, but also its look. "That lowercase 'o' trapped between those two M's creates a unique word-shape that is translinguistic," Ed Pusz, director of the museum's graphic design department says. "It's accessible to people who don't speak the language."

So it's with a sense of great care that the museum's leaders introduce their latest innovation: a redesigned MoMA logo, a newly scrubbed face by which the revered institution will soon present itself to the world on signs, coffee mugs and subway ads, and throughout the Yoshio Taniguchi-designed expansion and renovation planned to open near the end of 2004. As befits a change of such import, the redesign was undertaken with much attention: the museum hired perhaps the world's foremost typographer, paid him in the low five figures and spent eight months scrutinizing every tiny step in the process.

The outcome? Well, it's subtle.

You would have to look rather closely to see it. Extremely closely. In fact, someone could set the old logo and the new logo side by side and stare for some time before detecting even the slightest distinction. The folks who led the exhaustive makeover process couldn't be more pleased.

As might be expected of some of the most visually aware people in the world, those who have worked on the Modern's typefaces have a remarkable history of typographic self-scrutiny. In 1964, the museum replaced its geometric letterforms typical of the Bauhaus and German modernism with Franklin Gothic No. 2, one of the grandest and most familiar of American typefaces. Designed in 1902 by Morris Fuller Benton in Jersey City, Franklin is simultaneously muscular, with an imposing weight, and humanist, with letterforms reminiscent of the strokes of the calligrapher's pen rather than a mechanical compass. "Quite simply, it's a face that's modern with roots," Ivan Chermayeff, the designer who made the selection for the museum, recalled recently. "It has some character, and therefore some warmth about it, and some sense of the hand – i.e., the artist. All of which seemed to me to make a lot of sense for the Museum of Modern Art, which is not only looking to the future but also looking to the past."

Mr. Chermayeff's logic held up. Aside from what Mr. Pusz calls a "blip" around the time the museum's expansion opened in 1984, the museum has used Franklin consistently for nearly 40 years. So when the Modern asked the Toronto-based

designer Bruce Mau to explore a range of possibilities for the new building's signage – including rounder, more symmetrical typefaces – he felt strongly that Franklin should be left alone. "Everybody gets tired of their own voice," Mr. Mau said from his studio in Toronto, "and so they want to change it. But I was like: 'Don't mess with it! It's an extraordinary landmark identity: don't throw the baby out with the bathwater.'"

The museum's director, Glen Lowry, agreed. "We looked at all sorts of options, and said, 'You know, we don't need to go there.' Our self-image hasn't shifted so dramatically that our identity needs to be expressed in an utterly new way. We don't need to go from chintz to stripes."

But Mr. Mau noticed that the Franklin the museum was using didn't seem to him like Franklin at all. Somewhere in the process of its evolution from Benton's original metal type to the readily available digital one it had lost some of its spirit, becoming "a hybrid digital soulless version," in Mr. Pusz's words. Metal type traditionally has slight variations between point sizes, to compensate for the properties of ink and differences in proportion. But digital versions of historic typefaces are often created from metal originals of a single point size – as was the case with the commercially available Franklin. It had been digitized from metal type of a small size, distending the proportions at its larger sizes. Once its defects were recognized, they became glaring: the letters were squat and paunchy, sapping all the elegance out of the white space between them. With some of the signage applications in the new building requiring type four feet tall, the small variations became "hideous," Mr. Pusz said.

The museum approached the pre-eminent typographer Matthew Carter about "refreshing" the typeface. On the Mac in his third-floor walk-up apartment in Cambridge, Mass., Mr. Carter has designed many of the letterforms we swallow daily in unthinking gulps – among them typefaces for *National Geographic*, *Sports Illustrated* and *The Washington Post*, as well as Bell Centennial, used in phone books, and Verdana, the Microsoft screen font. Trained originally as a type founder – the person who forges type from hot metal – Mr. Carter pioneered typography's transition to computer-based desktop publishing in the 1980's when he helped found Bitstream, the first digital type foundry. He was one of the first to embrace the idea that type no longer necessarily began with metal forms and ended as an impression on paper; it could be designed, implemented and read without ever escaping the confines of the computer screen.

Refreshing Franklin was, Mr. Carter said, "like asking an architect to design an exact replica of a building." But it was a job he was happy to do: "That opportunity to really study these letterforms and capture them as faithfully as I could was sort of an education to me."

His task was aided by eight trays of metal type of Franklin Gothic No. 2 that had surfaced not long before in the Modern's basement. Not knowing at the time what he would do with them, Mr. Pusz wheeled the trays one by one on a desk chair down the block to his temporary office on the Avenue of the Americas. Mr. Carter scanned printed samples from the trays, and using a software program called Fontographer,

began the long process of plotting the curve points for each letter – a task requiring the full extent of his long-learned craft. He also had to invent the variety of characters typical of modern fonts that didn't exist in the metal – currency signs and accents, for example. The resulting typeface – two slight variations, actually, one for signage and one for text – are now being tested on mockups by the Modern's graphic design department to see how they look in different sizes and forms, and, after yet more tweaking, will soon be installed on computers across the museum.

But will anyone notice? "I suspect that if we're really successful the public won't really notice the difference, it will just feel right," Mr. Lowry said. Even if this is a carefully calculated exercise in branding, at least it's true (nearly comically so) to the mission of the museum: less MoMA Inc. than a bunch of aesthetes staring at the shape of their own name until their eyes cross. Perhaps in the sharpened interstices of the "m" or the slightly more pinched ellipse of the "o" there might exist a statement of what the Modern wants to be – you just have to squint to see it. "I think that's really at the heart of the institution's premise, which is a deep and profound respect for the past, and an absolute willingness to engage the present – and a recognition that they're not mutually exclusive," Mr. Lowry said.

No, but sometimes they do look pretty similar.

• LINES 75-76 after Richard Hollis, email to Stuart Bailey, March 11, 2011:

It's the quality of the decision-making, not the contorted elaboration of 'research' that define an institution, expressed in its 'image'. (It's difficult to avoid putting words in brackets – they're so slippery in use.) The role of public relations and whole departments …

• LINES 80-84 after Hala Auji, "In Visible Changes," unpublished document, 2006, pp. 1-2:

MoMA Gothic's roughly 0.08" addition, much like the Taniguchi building, represents an exorbitant amount of money, time, decision-making, and collaborative effort. But unlike the revamped architecture, the change in the logo was one that the people behind it didn't really expect the general public to notice. In fact, the museum's director, Glenn D. Lowry stated in the article that "[I]f … we're successful, the public won't … notice the difference. It will 'just feel right.'"

Considering the amount of money (in the low five figures) the creation of MoMA Gothic took to produce invisible, it "just feels right" results, it's hard not to speculate about other unseen strategies the museum might have suggested by such a change. In both examples, MoMA's emphasis on the invisibility of its design is not a case of random labeling. Could it be that with the ubiquity of lowbrow advertising

today, the museum senses a growing disdain in the market towards the visible, and thus chooses the opposite route?

• LINES 86-92 after Andrew Blum, "The Modern's Other Renovation" [see "Lines 64-77" above]

• LINES 96-110, after Benjamin Thorel, email to David Reinfurt, March 23, 2011:

Most of the time, normal situation, I say Beaubourg, or Pompidou, or Le Centre Pompidou. I tell people I am going to Beaubourg or to the Centre Pompidou; let's meet at Beaubourg, let's meet at Pompidou, let's meet in front of Pompidou, in front of Beaubourg; there's that show at Pompidou; there's this opening at Beaubourg tonight, and so on. Most of the time it doesn't mean the museum as such, but the place, the building or the piazza in front of it.

Sometimes, I use another nickname: Pomps. I guess in English we would write Pomp's. It's rather a private joke, with only a few friends (not from the art world specifically though), which I like. Like: Are you going to Pomp's?

More rarely, and mostly writing text messages and short emails, with lesser friends then, I sometimes say Pompompidou, or Pompompidoupou. Not that I think that Claude Pompidou was as glamourous as Betty Boop, but I really like alliterations.

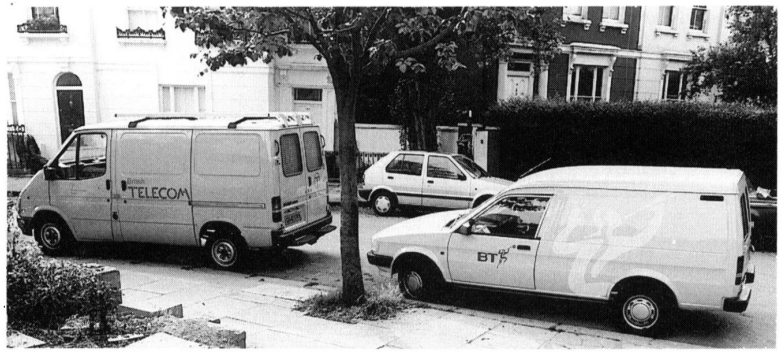
• LINES 114-128 after The Tate Gallery, *TGMA, Ten Principles for Interpretation for TGMA* (Tate archive: TG 12/7/5/4), 19 March 1998, as quoted in Caroline Donnellan, *Towards Tate Modern: Patronage and Funding*, PDF, pp. 13-14:

Wolff Olins' marketing brief for the new Tate used the word "experience" several times throughout the document. The new Tate vision was to shift away from the former parameters of art spectatorship which was made more user friendly and accessible by the funky new building. The Tate had the flexibility to be re-branded because it was confident of the new market which it had contributed in making. Concerning the museum marketing Olins declared "… more people now visit museums and galleries than attend football matches – the potential for increasing its audience was clearly enormous. The second motivation was to establish a distinct brand appeal through accessibility and a forward thinking approach to art …"

Brian Boylan, the lead man from Wolf Olins was appointed to establish: "Ten principles for interpretation for TGMA [Tate Gallery of Modern Art] – March 1998. 1) TGMA acknowledges that there is not a single chronology of 20th-century art but many histories, and that every work is capable of multiple readings. 2) TGMA must enable people to be confident about their own feelings towards modern and contemporary art. 3) Visitors' expectations, responses and experiences must be understood and must influence TGMA's policies and practice. 4) TGMA uses the term "interpretation" to include education and information. 5) Interpretation makes an intellectual contribution. 6) Developing exhibitions and displays is a collaborative activity concerned with ideas and communication of those ideas; it acknowledges the positive value of creative tensions involved in this process. 7) Authorship helps to make apparent an art work's multiple readings by highlighting just one, and it helps visitors to engage with art in a more personalised way. 8) TGMA must accommodate a wide spectrum of voices from inside and outside the institution, both artists and non-artists. 9) Interpretation and communications must work in an integrated way. 10) Innovation, experimentation and evaluation are key opportunities for TGMA to pursue, while building on the best practise of the Tate."

• LINE 132 after Robin Kinross, "Conversation with Richard Hollis on Graphic Design History," *Journal of Design History* Vol. 5 No. 1 (1992), p. 80:

RH: Do you think that's true? I haven't talked about this in what I've written so far. And I don't know whether it's going to become the – [*distracted by a radio in the street, looks at the British Telecom vans again, now preparing to move off*] It is incredible: the old van and the new van. You see: there is graphic design moving away, followed by marketing.



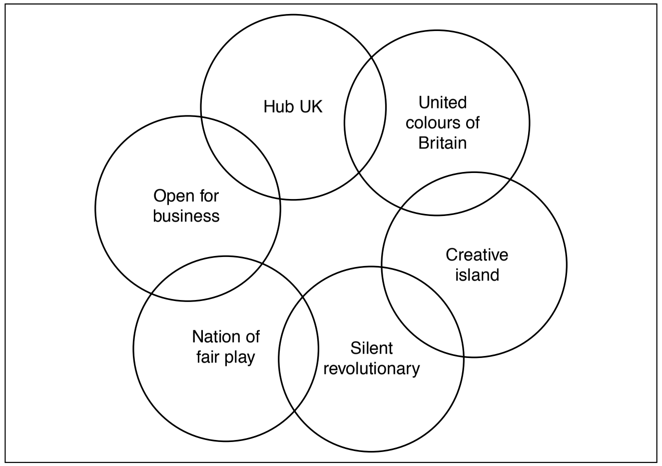
• LINES 136-149 after Nick Relph, "Excerpts from an Unfinished Script," (Press Release), Herald Street, 2010, pp. 1-2:

Under the chairmanship of John Sorrell the Design Council had organized a discussion group featuring various heavy-hitters (Sir David Putnam, Alan Yentob, John Hegarty of advertising agency Bartle Bogle Hegarty) from broadcasting, advertising, design and journalism, the purpose of which was to consider Britain's identity at the end of the century. The findings of the discussion were published in a paper called *New Brand for a New Britain* on the very same day that New Labour won the general election with a huge majority. Shortly afterwards, a report was commissioned to develop some of the ideas put forward in the paper, and to see how they might translate in policy. The job was awarded to Demos, a think-tank with close ties to New Labour and under the direction of Geoff Mulgan, who would eventually become a special advisor to Blair. Titled *Britain™*, the report featured a zingy lime cover by Wolff Olins who themselves had got in on the act, publishing the survey Made in the UK – whose statistics appear throughout the Demos report – and producing a filmed segment that aired on the BBC's *The Money Programme* in which they proposed redesigning the Union Jack.

Britain™ begins: 'Britain's identity is in flux. Renewed national confidence in the arts, fashion, technology, architecture and design has coincided with the departure from Hong Kong, devolution, further integration with Europe, the imminence of the millennium and Princess Diana's death.' It goes on to detail the degrees of embarrassment 'Britishness' provokes at home and abroad. The general consensus is that it is a country whose few positive attributes are seen to be firmly historical, bound up in the traditions and fixed certainties of the pre-war and immediate post-war era. Abundant with bad food, snobbery and poverty, the UK is held in low regard throughout the world, if it is regarded at all: 'To most people in China or Brazil, and even to many in the United States or Russia, Britain has neither a positive nor a negative image. It simply has no clear image at all.' The domestic self-image is noted for being closer intertwined to its core institutions (monarchy, the Beeb) than other nations and it is therefore more vulnerable to confusion and disillusionment when those institutions betray the public trust or are under threat. […]

The report mentions the arts repeatedly – held as vital in embellishing the national brand with a gentle non-conformity and dynamism, a tasteful tarnish. These various cosmopolitan trills, Leonard suggests, could come together as a chorus in exhibitions and museums housed in airports to greet international visitors. In attack mode, Philip Dodd (then director of the ICA, which hosted a series of preliminary lunches where contributors to the report first discussed some of these ideas) suggested that traveling exhibitions organized by the British Council should stop going 'down old colonial routes ... We should go to Washington and take over the National Gallery there. It is time to think big!' The indistinct word 'arts' actually appears less frequently than its trendy cousin, the even more nebulous 'creativity'. In the ergot of marketing, the term 'creativity' is so useful because it acts as a catchall – it can just as easily be used to describe a new design for a wine rack as

it can a painting. In addition, whereas 'the arts' refers to the tangible manifestations of various practices – the play performed, say – "creativity" can encompass both the production itself (the talents of actors, director, costume design etc) and also the business that surrounds it (the nifty sponsorship deal, promotional copy and so on). In fact the creativity that doesn't directly yield anything, the pure speculative idea, could arguably be said to be the most valuable kind to the entrepreneurial class. By this point in the late 90s with the concept of job security increasingly under threat and the rise of the internet harboring in new systems of access, distribution and gain, the weightless creative thought began to have more and more currency. Creativity in this state was easier to transmit and receive, or co-opt if necessary. It had, to use a financial term, liquidity. Describing the dot in his Primer of Visual Literacy, Donis A. Dondis states that 'When any liquid material is dropped on a surface, it assumes a rounded form, even it does not simulate a perfect dot.' The rounded form, which will come to spread through this text like frogspawn, in this instance materializes toward the end of *Britain™* as an illustration featuring six overlapping circles, within each a 'story' of which Britain could be proud, 'Creative Britain' among them. It looks nothing less than a new flag.



• LINES 153-156 after Andrew Blum, "The Modern's Other Renovation" [see "Lines 64-77" above]

• LINES 160-171 after Nick Relph, "Excerpts from an Unfinished Script," (Press Release), Herald Street, 2010, p. 1:

Two of the pillars of Thatcherism were privatization of the public sector and deregulation of the private sector. Government interference was to be kept at a minimum whilst the public, now free as 'individuals' within an open market, were encouraged to use their initiative, to partake in an 'enterprise culture'. Lord Young was one of the chief proponents of enterprise within government and by 1987 had been promoted to Secretary of State at the Department of Trade and Industry. By this point in the 1980s a wave of consumerism had been unleashed and the country was drowning in choice. With everything seemingly for sale, the government had necessarily understood the importance of how things are sold and had initiated a full-blown and unprecedented love affair with advertising and design. The Department of Trade and Industry was central to this development and at the bequest of Lord Young was itself given a makeover by the brand consultancy Wolff Olins. Founded in the mid 60s by Michael Wolff and Wally Olins and whose early work included the branding of the London borough of Camden and the design of the labels for Apple Records, Wolff Olins was one of the first and most successful agencies of its type. Although commonplace today, the methods of extensive research undertaken to build up a kind of portrait of public perception of a corporate client – and to subsequently beautify that picture – were almost unheard of. Because there was no competition at the time, Wolff Olins were on top from the start. For Lord Young, they designed a zippy, lowercase logo that rechristened the department as the DTi. Comprised of ascendant left-to-right diagonals, the logos structural lines echoed the rising stock indices of the time. By the time of this titular shrinkage, the DTi's budget was swelling to nearly £14 million, a more than threefold increase from 6 years prior, and with the DTi acting as conduit a good amount of this government money was being channeled into the Design Council, a non-departmental body historically somewhat ignored by Downing Street but now seen as a vital intermediary between companies and the ever-increasing number of design and brand consultancies. The Design Council obliged with the Funded Consultancy Scheme in which companies were offered 15 days free consultancy on a design project, and in publications and brochures like 'Profit by Design' in which things were really made explicit: 'To put it simply, the design process is a planning exercise to maximize sales and profits.'

• LINES 175-179 after Catherine de Smet, "About One Striped Rectangle: Jean Widmer and the Centre Pompidou Logo," *Design Issues* Vol. 26 No. 1 (Winter 2010) pp. 77-78:

Although the first appearances of the striped emblem were during the Centre's inaugural period, it wasn't yet part of the Centre's visual identity. At the beginning of 1977, it had just been designed and it led an independent, reserved, and confused existence. It was used, for example, in a special issue of *L'Express* devoted to the opening. It was reproduced in various places on its own without any connection to

other elements of the guidelines. […] Indeed, VDA had not yet carried the day, and just a few weeks prior to the opening some people felt that the need for the logo was more pressing than ever. A response wasn't slow in coming—eleven stripes of equal width, stacked one above the other, alternately black and white (or other background color) forming a rectangle crossed by a twelfth band that zigzagged from the lower left to the upper right corner. Thus one of the most successful logos and most striking examples of graphic design in France in the second half of the twentieth century was produced for the sake of compromise by a designer who thought it superfluous.

• LINES 181-200 after Catherine de Smet, "About One Striped Rectangle: Jean Widmer and the Centre Pompidou Logo," *Design Issues* Vol. 26 No. 1 (Winter 2010), p. 76:

The matter of the logo, dismissed by VDA, was nonetheless far from being decided. "Opting for a descriptive logo," claimed the text that VDA submitted for the competition, "would mean fixing Beaubourg in the present moment at the risk of its going out of fashion," whereas the firm's recommended solution would "inscribe Beaubourg in history." In spite of these arguments and the effectiveness of the proposed system that did without a logo, those in charge at EPCB asked Widmer and Hiestand to develop ideas for a possible emblem. In the fall of 1974, VDA presented the results of their recent investigations. Their document (*The 1st Concept of the Trademark Image for the CB*) listed "the possibilities for differentiating among various departments," which included a set of symbols: a triangle for IRCAM, a circle for CCI, a diamond for the library, and a square for the plastic arts, all geometric forms that could fit together to constitute a single figure. VDA's objective, however, as Widmer recalls now, was to convince doubters of the pointlessness of such a system, which would be redundant with the color coding. Their persuasion was eminently successful: symbols were dropped from the plan of action, and VDA began work according to its initial proposal.

"The Centre Beaubourg is neither a bank nor an airport nor a grand hotel," pointed out the document originally sent to the competitors. Even if some details should be refined, they shouldn't be taken "too far." The Centre aimed above all to be "at the service of diverse categories of the public (especially the young) interested in intellectual and artistic pursuits." The signage system and its supports "should be carefully done, precise, and effective" while at the same time appearing "simple and unaffected."

• LINES 204-205 after Gustave Affeulpin [Albert Meister], in Luca Frei, *The so-called utopia of the centre beaubourg – An interpretation* (London: Book Works, 2007), pp. 9-10:

Ten years have passed since the Centre Beaubourg was inaugurated, and still everyone asks me to give my account of an experience which, at best, has been considered a utopia, but more often an attempt to sabotage our culture, a threat to the fundamental values of our society ... Re-reading the newspapers of that time, the sarcasm of the ones on the right and the annoyed scepticism of the ones on the left, remembering the interventions of the parlimentarians, demanding for the orgies and the sacrilege to be stopped, remembering the offended academics and the outraged Parents, remembering the outcry of the bishops and the bitterness of the censors, the put-downs of the grammatologists and of the crumpled etceteras. But don't worry, I do not intend to come back on these subjects and all that has been said and written since, once utopia began to appear less foolish and thinkers started to engage with it anew, analysing it, dissecting it, conceptualising it, lacanising it, demonstrating in short that in fact it was not a true utopia but just nonsense and emptiness.

It is therefore useless to attract attention to such rubbish, to the elaborations against it and for it: it would suffice to go to the library to find everything that has been printed on the subject. Above all, for us beaubourgians, what counts is what is done and lived rather than what is said: things count, not their appearance. Of course, there will always be an Anaxagoras trying to convince us that we have been clever because we have hands, but these people form part of the cohort of epigones, of the prophets of the aftermath.

So, what I would like to describe here is what we have done, with all the details of the actual hurdles that we had to overcome. Isn't that actually what we expect from an account?

• LINES 209-218 after Catherine de Smet, "About One Striped Rectangle: Jean Widmer and the Centre Pompidou Logo," *Design Issues* Vol. 26 No. 1 (Winter 2010), pp. 74-75:

Among "problems to be resolved," formulated for the sake of the competitors, the EPCB very baldly asked, "Is a logo required for Beaubourg? If not, what would you recommend?" VDA responded very plainly: no logo, no symbol. On this point, the winners didn't differ much from the other competitors, who were almost unanimous on this subject. Although the issue of descriptive signage was the order of the day, converging with the very fashionable trend of "environmental design," logos were in a state of crisis. Just six years after May 1968, logos were thought of as a marketing ploy and viewed as ideologically contemptible, totally at odds with the ambition of a public institution with a cultural mission. Even when it came to the image of companies with business goals, the notion of a trademark was the object of lively criticism. Already in 1967, the American designer Jay Doblin had ironically emphasized that in order to learn to read logos it was necessary to know

at least 3000 different signs – a task as complex, he pointed out, as familiarizing oneself with Chinese ideograms. Doblin, who had formerly worked with Raymond Loewy and co-founded (with Vignelli, Eckerstrom, and Noorda) the design firm Unimark International two years before, knew what he was talking about. Owning up to his own illiteracy in the matter, he then risked the provocative hypothesis of the total uselessness of such symbols. Total wastes of time and money – rumor had invoices rising to $100,000 – they could even be obstacles to the prestige of the enterprises they were meant to enhance. Concluding his iconoclastic diatribe, Doblin suggested abandoning logos to their fatal perversity and adopting typography instead: "A little Helvetica lower case lettering can get the job done." In that spirit, Chermayeff and Geismar had chosen Franklin Gothic for New York's Museum of Modern Art. This American sans serif typeface was designed at the beginning of the twentieth century, and its use in writing the museum's name sufficed to guarantee the museum's visual identity. (The contractions MOMA, and later MoMA, came about only later.) The solution that VDA proposed followed that trend but with a typeface expressly conceived for the Centre.

• LINES 222-224 after Catherine de Smet, "About One Striped Rectangle: Jean Widmer and the Centre Pompidou Logo" [see "Lines 219-228" above]

• LINES 226-234 after "Centre Georges Pompidou," last modified October 5, 2011, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centre_Georges_Pompidou

• LINES 238-241 after Andrew Blum, "The Modern's Other Renovation" [see "Lines 67-81" above]

• LINES 242-253 after James T. Soby, letter to Alfred H. Barr, Jr., 1966, MoMA archive:

Dear Helen and Alfred:

Haven't you two characters got anything better to do than spend an entire summer haggling over the problem of whether the abbreviation for the Museum of Modern Art should be written as MOMA or MoMA?

I must say that in this instance I think the lady is right. In all my 85 years in the museum it never occurred to me to [use] a lower-case "o." It may be correct but it gives me terribly visual hiccoughs. I can only conclude that the estimable A.H. Barr is losing his sight and mind in Greensboro—the only prairie town in the

entire lush State of Vermont. I drove through there once and we had a sand storm and I left hastily.

Sincerely,
James t. Soby

• LINES 257-261 after Nick Relph, "Excerpts from an Unfinished Script"
[see "Lines 167-178" above]

• LINES 263-266 after Wally Olins, *On Brand* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003), pp. 204-5:

The phrase 'corporate identity' seems to have been coined sometime in the 1950s by Walter Margulies, of the pioneering US consultancy Lippincott & Margulies, to describe the activity in which all of the organization's visible manifestations are designed to create a coherent corporate whole associated with a specific theme, attitude or personality. The concept of corporate identity was of course directly descended from the work carried out by the AEG and before that the great nineteenth-century railway companies, but it was presented differently, much more commercially. When he worked for International Harvester and similar huge companies, Margulies took design consultancy right into the corporate heartland. Thanks partly to people like him and also to a changing commercial climate in the 1960s and more particularly in the 1970s and '80s the corporate identity discipline took off around the world, especially in the US, followed closely by Britain. The traditional European-based, designer-led identity programmes with a vague and high-sounding but rather generalized purpose mutated into systems that could help companies to sell themselves and their products. Computer companies, automobile companies, airlines, oil companies and then organizations in financial services began to learn that they could project a clear and differentiated idea of themselves to all of their audiences, from shareholders to customers to staff, by using visual identity systems which demonstrated their sense of purpose or their vision. At first much of this activity was led by designers and architects. Many of the famous names in the field at this time were themselves designers or from a design background. Eliot Noyes in the US, who worked for Mobil and IBM, was a classic high-minded designer. He led IBM away from Queen Anne repro into '60s modern on the basis that modern equipment had to look modern. Fletcher, Forbes and Gill, a design consultancy that mutated into the highly successful Pentagram partnership, is the classic example of this kind of business. As I write, happily it still thrives. But gradually the mood changed.

Partly to cope with the complex requirements of their clients, partly in an effort to learn to speak the same language, and partly because they saw an opportunity

to get closer to their clients on a longer term basis, design consultancies of various kinds and levels of sophistication began to employ marketing people whose background was in commerce and industry rather than design. These new consultants working side by side with designers, were educated at business schools and had MBAs. They couldn't design but they could deal with their clients on entirely equal terms because they came from the same business background. They had the same disciplines and attitudes.

• LINES 268-270 after Richard Hollis, *Graphic Design: A Concise History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1994), p. 153

House style and corporate identity in France did not at this time attract as much energy as in America, but Loewy's Paris office had been active since 1953. In 1963 the pharmaceutical firm Roussel-Uclaf adopted a Loewy symbol not unlike that of the Chase Manhattan bank designed by Chermayeff & Geismar. It was composed of three identical parallellograms, arranged symmetrically within an equilateral triangle, leaving a similar equilateral triangle at the centre of the design. Many geometrical images of this kind could be found in a ready-reference book, *Hornung's Handbook of Designs and Devices*. Rationalizing the choice of such symbols became corporate identity practice. Roussel-Uclaf's is typical: 'Incisive, balanced, open, its personality does not represent any particular specialization and allows the group's identity to extend beyond the confines of the pharmeceutical industry.'

• LINES 274-278 after Hala Auji, "In Visible Changes," unpublished document, 2006, p. 8:

"The Modern" became "MoMA" and its first unified visual identity appeared, designed by the then-newly established Chermayeff & Geismar New York-based studio. When hired for the job in 1964, Chermayeff & Geismar who later designed numerous familiar corporate logos, including American Airlines, Xerox and Mobil among others, had been asked to create "a clean and straight forward typographic identity that would reflect the museum's major renovation." The museum's desire for directness and simplicity reflects the Swiss Modernist influences in American design of the time: an aesthetic design language popular for its organizational qualities in its legibility and perceived rationality.

• LINES 280-284 after Andrew Blum, "The Modern's Other Renovation"
[see "Lines 64-77" above]

• LINES 286-289, after "Report to the Museum of Modern Art," November 27, 1963, MoMA archive:

A. *Symbol*
It is obvious to us (and to the Museum) that unless a symbol is truly appropriate to the Museum, it is better not to have one. In investigating possibilities for a symbol, we tried a number of different directions, none of which led to any satisfactory solutions, perhaps because there *is* no one symbol of modern art, or of the diverse activies of the Museum. Therefore we have concluded that it is impossible for the Museum of Modern Art to have a symbol which is meaningful. We also feel that the Museum is in no position to *establish* a symbol, whether meaningful or not.
The amount of exposure in the established communications media in those areas outside the Museum's already captive audience is very limited. In any case it is questionable in our opinion, whether an institution such as the Museum of Modern Art should, under any circumstances, have a symbol.

• LINES 293-295 after Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (1962; New York: Vintage, 1992), p. 186:

While all these uses of the image have become more important with each decade of the twentieth century, a more abstract kind of image is the peculiar product of our age. Its tyranny is pervasive. An image in this sense is not simply a trademark, a design, a slogan, or an easily remembered picture. It is a studiously crafted personality profile of an individual, institution, corporation, product, or service. It is a value-caricature, shaped in three dimensions, of synthetic materials. Such images in ever increasing numbers have been fabricated and re-inforced by the new techniques of the Graphic Revolution.

• LINES 298-305 after Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (1962; New York: Vintage, 1992), pp. 185-186:

It was by elaborate design that the cumbersome name "International Business Machines Corporation" was made in the public mind into "IBM." This is probably the most expensive and most valuable abbreviation in history. Under the creative direction of Eliot Noyes and a design group consisting of Paul Rand, Charles Eames, and George Nelson, the firm developed its streamlined trademark, to project a "clean, impressive" image. Nowadays a trademark is seldom a simple by-product of other activities. It is not merely the name, initials, or signature of the maker or owner, or a hallmark assigned by a guild. Usually it is produced by specialists.

• LINES 309-311 after Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (1962; New York: Vintage, 1992), pp. 186-187:

When we use the word "image" in this new sense, we plainly confess a distinction between what we see and what is really there, and we express our preferred interest in what is to be seen. Thus an image is a visible public "personality" as distinguished from an inward private "character." "Public" goes with "image" as naturally as with "interest" or "opinion." The overshadowing image, we readily admit, covers up whatever may really be there. By our very use of the term we imply that something can be done to it: the image can always be more or less successfully synthesized, doctored, repaired, refurbished, and improved, quite apart from (though not entirely independent of) the spontaneous original of which the image is a public portrait.

• LINES 315-325 after Josef Albers, description for a Black Mountain College leaflet, 1935, accessed October 11, 2011, see: http://www.bmcproject.org/PUBLICATIONS/1934-35/emblem.htm

• LINES 329-331 after "Tate," last modified October 3, 2011, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tate

• LINES 335-337 after "Museum of Modern Art," last modified September 15, 2011, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Museum_of_Modern_Art

• LINES 339-341 after Andrew Blum, "The Modern's Other Renovation" [see "Lines 64-77" above]

• LINES 345-347 after Johannes Itten, 1916, quoted in Frank Whitford, *Bauhaus* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1984), p. 106:

Itten thought it impossible to consider colour apart from form, and vice versa, since one cannot exist without the other. A short essay which he wrote in 1916 gives the essence of his theory of colour and form.

> The clear geometric form is the one most easily comprehended and its basic elements are the circle, the square and the triangle. Every possible form lies dormant in these formal elements. They are visible to him who sees, invisible to him who does not.

• LINES 347-349 after Richard Hollis, *Graphic Design: A Concise History* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1994), p. 53:

These developments, from Expressionism towards functionalism and from handcraft towards design for machine production, can be traced in the changing graphic design at the Bauhaus, the famous school of arts and crafts, established in Weimar in 1919. Its first letterhead used the typeface designed by Behrens, Mediäval. The school's first emblem was like a mason's mark, a spread-eagled figure carrying aloft a pyramid. By 1924 this had been replaced by the geometricized profile of a head (adapted from a much earlier design by Oskar Schlemmer, one of the staff), which could be simply reproduced from printer's 'rules' – strips of wood or metal that printed as solid lines.

• LINES 351-362 after Jacques Rancière, "The Surface of Design" in *The Future of the Image* (London: Verso, 2007), pp. 92-93:

In the event, the question might be formulated as follows: what resemblance is there between Stéphane Mallarmé, a French poet writing *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard* in 1897, and Peter Behrens, German architect, engineer and designer who, ten years later, was in charge of designing the products, adverts and even buildings of the AEG (*Allegemeine Elektrizitäts Gesellschaft*)? On the face of it, this is a stupid question. Mallarmé is known as the author of poems that became increasingly rare, short and quintessential as his poetic art developed. The latter is generally epitomized by a contrast between two states of language: a crude state that serves for communication, description, instruction, and hence for a use of speech analogous to the circulation of commodities and currency; and an essential state that 'transposes a fact of nature into its virtual vibratory disappearance' so as to reveal the 'pure notion'.

What relationship is there between a poet thus defined and Peter Behrens, an engineer in the service of a major brand producing bulbs, kettles or heaters? Unlike the poet, Behrens is involved in the mass production of utilitarian equipment. And he is also the supporter of a unified, functionalist vision. He wants everything submitted to the same principle of unity, from the construction of workshops to the brand's logogram and advertising. He wants to reduce the objects produced to a certain number of 'typical' forms. What he calls 'imparting style' to his firm's output assumes the application of a single principle to objects and to the icons that offer them to the public: stripping the objects and their images of any decorative prettiness, of anything that answers to the routines of buyers or sellers and their rather silly dreams of luxury and sensual pleasure. Behrens wants to reduce objects and icons to essential forms, geometrical motifs, and streamlined curves. According to this principle, he wants the design of objects to approximate as closely as possible to their function, and the design of the icons that represent them to approximate as closely as possible to the information they are supposed to provide about those objects.

• LINES 366-368 after Karl Kraus, 1912, quoted in Hal Foster, *Design and Crime* (London/New York: Verso, 2002), pp. 14-16:

Loos began his battle with Art Nouveau a decade before "Ornament and Crime." A pointed attack comes in 1900, in the form of an allegorical skit about "a poor little rich man" who commissions an Art Nouveau designer to put "Art in each and every thing":

> Each room formed a symphony of colors, complete in itself. Walls, wall coverings, furniture, and materials were made to harmonize in the most artful ways. Each household item had its own specific place and was integrated with the others in the most wonderful combinations. The architect has forgotten nothing, absolutely nothing. Cigar ashtrays, cutlery, light switches – everything, everything was made by him.

This *Gesamtkunstwerk* does more than combine architecture, art, and craft; it commingles subject and object: "the individuality of the owner was expressed in every ornament, every form, every nail." For the Art Nouveau designer this is perfection: "You are complete!" he exults to the owner. But the owner is not so sure: this completion "taxed [his] brain." Rather than a sanctuary from modern stress, his Art Nouveau interior is another expression of it: "The happy man suddenly felt deeply, deeply unhappy … he was precluded from all future living and striving, developing and desiring. He thought, this is what it means to learn to go about life with one's own corpse. Yes indeed. He is finished. *He is complete!*"

For the Art Nouveau designer this completion reunites art and life, and all signs of death are banished. For Loos, on the other hand, this triumphant overcoming of limits is a catastrophic loss of the same – the loss of objective constraints required to define any "future living and striving, developing and desiring." Far from a transcendence of death, this loss of finitude is a death-in-life, as figured in the ultimate trope of indistinction, living "with one's own corpse."

Such is the malaise of "the poor little rich man": rather than a man of qualities, he is a man without them (as another Viennese scourge, the great novelist Robert Musil, would soon put it), for what he lacks, in his very completion, is difference or distinction. In a typically pithy statement of 1912 Kraus would call this lack of distinction, which precludes "all future living and striving," a lack of "running-room":

> Adolf Loos and I – he literally and I linguistically – have done nothing more than show that there is a distinction between an urn and a chamber pot and it is this distinction above all that provides culture with running-room [*Spielraum*]. The others, the positive ones [i.e., those who fail to make the

distinction], are divided into those who use the urn as a chamber pot and those who use the chamber pot as an urn.

Here "those who use the urn as a chamber pot" art Art Nouveau designers who want to infuse art (the urn) into the utilitarian object (the chamber pot). Those who do the reverse are functionalist modernists who want to elevate the utilitarian object into art. (A few years later Marcel Duchamp would trump both sides with his dysfunctional urinal, *Fountain*, presented as art, but that's another story.) For Kraus the two mistakes are symmetrical – both confuse use-value and art-value – and both are perverse inasmuch as both risk a regressive indistinction of things: they fail to see that objective limits are necessary for "the running-room" that allows for the making of a liberal kind of subjectivity and culture. This is why Loos opposes not only the total design of Art Nouveau but also its wanton subjectivism ("individually expressed in every nail"). Neither Loos nor Kraus says anything about a natural "essence" of art, or an absolute "autonomy" of culture; the stake is one of "distinctions" and "running room," of proposed differences and provisional spaces.

• LINES 372-374 after "A coeur de Paris, le 'Centre Beaubourg,'" accessed October 11, http://www.centrepompidou.fr/education/ressources/ENS-architecture-Centre-Pompidou/au_coeur_de_paris/p2.htm

• LINES 378-381 after "The History of Tate at Millbank," accessed October 10, 2011, http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/building/history.htm

• LINES 383-385 after "Search Results: Tate History Stationarys," accessed October 11, 2011, http://www3.tate.org.uk/research/researchservices/archive/showcase/results.jsp?theme=1&object=454

• LINES 387-395 after Dexter Sinister, "We Would Like to Share (Some Notes on a Possible School Badge)," *Notes for an Art School* (Nicosia: Dexter Sinister, 2006), inside back cover; see also http://www.dextersinister.org/library.html?id=15:

Heraldry is a graphic language evolved from around 1130 ad to identify families, states and other social groups. Specific visual forms yield specific meanings, and these forms may be combined in an intricate syntax of meaning and representation. Any heraldic device is described by both a written description and its corresponding graphic form. The set of a priori written instructions is called a Blazon – to give it form is to Emblazon.

In order to ensure that the pictures drawn from the descriptions are accurate and reasonably alike, Blazons follow a strict set of rules and share a unique vocabulary. Objects, such as animals and shapes, are called Charges; colors are renamed, such as Argent for Silver or Or for Gold; and divisions are described in terms such as Dexter ("right" in Latin) and Sinister ("left").

A given heraldic form may be drawn in many alternative ways, all considered equivalent, just as the letter "A" may be printed in a variety of fonts. The shape of a badge, for example, is immaterial and different artists may depict the same Blazon in slightly different ways.

The Blazon is a fixed, abstract literary translation of the open, representational graphic symbol (and vice versa.) Using a limited but precise vocabulary, full descriptions of shields range in complexity, from the relatively simple:

Azure, a bend Or

to the relatively complex:

(Party) per fess, Vert and Gules, a boar's head erased Argent, langued Gules, holding in his mouth the shank- bone of a deer proper, in chief: and in base two wings conjoined in lure reversed Argent. Above the shield is placed an Helm befitting his degree with a Mantling Vert doubled Argent, and on a Wreath of the Liveries is set for Crest a hand proper holding a Celtic cross paleways, Or, and in an Escrol over the same the motto "I'Audace".

Today, schools, companies and other institutions may obtain officially recognized forms from heraldic authorities, which have the force of a registered trademark. Heraldry might equally be considered part of a personal or institutional heritage, as well as as a manifestation of civic and/or national pride. However, many users of modern heraldic designs do not register with the proper authorities, and some designers do not follow the rules of heraldic design at all.

Bastards.

• LINES 399-401 after George Kubler, *The Shape of Time: Remarks on the History of Things* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 67:

Returning now to the place of invention in the history of things, we confront once again the paradox which arose earlier in this discussion. It is the paradox of generalization concerning unique events. Since no two things or events can occupy the same coordinates of space and time, every act differs from its predecessors and its successors. No two things or acts can be accepted as identical. Every act is an invention. Yet the entire organization of thought and language denies this simple affirmation of non-identity. We can grasp the universe only by simplifying it with ideas of identity by classes, types and categories and by rearranging the infinite continuation of non-identical events into a finite system of similitudes. It is in the notion of being that no event ever repeats, but it is in the

nature of thought that we understand events only by the identities we imagine among them.

• LINES 405-420 after "Paris 1882: Edouard Manet Meets Bass Ale," *Wig & Pen*, January 10, 2011, http://wigpen.blogspot.com/2011/01/edouard-manet-meets-bass-ale.html:

Sure, we're the same species as the Homo sapiens depicted in pre-20th century paintings, but who hasn't felt a disconnect when gazing in the art world's rear view mirror – a chasm separating earlier cultures from our own? In that, transformations in material culture deserve much of the credit. Which is one good reason why Edouard Manet's *A Bar at Folies-Bergère*, painted a year before his death in 1883, is exceptional.

Look at the counter of the bar in the above painting. You'll see two bottles of Bass Pale Ale, with their familiar red triangle logo. It's a brand that many of us know first hand. Seeing it in the painting connects us in a wink with late 19th century patrons (many of them perhaps British tourists) at Folies-Bergèrie. All at once, via a commercial logo, we've discovered a bridge over a cultural chasm.

Ironically, many Americans have told me that they've seen the painting but haven't noticed the beer. Some of them are not beer drinkers. Might others who *are*, however, be subject to the *invisible gorilla trap*, i.e., failing to see something in front of their noses, because it defies their expectations?

A Bar at Folies-Bergère must also be our longest-running example (albeit inadvertent) of product placement. Marketers at Bass must exult: *127 years of exposure to the brand in galleries and art books – that's a lot of eyeballs!*

• LINES 424-425 after Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (1962; New York: Vintage, 1992) p. 185:

A trademark (intended to become a standard for judging all products of a certain kind) is a legally protected set of letters, a picture, or a design, identifying a particular product. Because trademarks and many of the other images flooding our experiences are, like most other pseudo-events, expensive to produce, someone always has an interest in disseminating, re-enforcing, and exploiting them. Unlike other standards, they can be owned. To keep them legally valid as trademarks, the owner must constantly reassert his ownership.

• LINES 427-435, after "Gone Fishin'," *The Gentleman's Guide to Cocktail Conversation*, April 20, 2010, http://ggtcc.wordpress.com/category/cocktails:

Should you happen to find yourself at the bar next to one of the interesting types you hoped you might find, order a Bass Ale, if available. As the bartender goes off to get it, casually remark: "You know, normally I resist branding as much as possible, but every time I see Bass, I can't help but want one. It's a bit like the original Lacoste crocodile." Now, if you've managed to catch your neighbor's attention – and we will pretend that you have, you charming fellow you – you'll likely get an exceptionally confused look in return. This should not surprise you. Most casual drinkers, and even some very serious ones, don't know that the Red Triangle which adorns every bottle of Bass Ale is the first trademark ever issued in the UK.

In fact, in 1875, when the Trade Mark Registration Act became law, an employee of the Bass brewing company stood on line all night to make sure that, when the office opened in the morning, the Red Triangle would be the first on the books (closely followed by a Red Diamond for their strong ale). You could point to each time Apple releases a product for something of a modern analogue.

So, if the look you get back is one of open puzzlement, with a touch of curiosity, you should see fit to continue: "Well, the Red Triangle you see on ever Bass bottle is actually the first trademark ever issued in the UK. It was a bit of a status symbol, which even found it's way into a number of works of art. I'd guess that, if rappers had existed back then, they would have extolled the virtues of Bass rather than Cristal or Patron." If you've made it this far and maintained your compatriots attention: well done. Ask her what she's having.

• LINES 439-455 after Philip Thompson & Peter Davenport, *The Dictionary of Visual Language* (London: Bergstrom & Boyle, 1980) p. 110:

General Signs. The circle, square, triangle, CROSS, forked emblem. These are signs which together form the basic plastic language. The circle is the traditional symbol of eternity and the heavens. The square represents the world and denotes order. The triangle is a symbol of generative power and spiritual unity. The CROSS is a combination of active and passive elements. The forked emblem (Y), a medieval symbol for the trinity, is also an emblem for the paths of life. Although these broad interpretations occur in many religions and cultures throughout history, because of their formal simplicity they can be invested with infinite subjective meanings.

• LINES 459-461 after Umberto Eco, *The Open Work* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1980), pp. 14-15:

Hence, it is not overambitious to detect in the poetics of the "open" work – and even less so the "work in movement" – more or less specific overtones of trends in contemporary scientific thought. For example, it is a critical commonplace to refer to

the spatiotemporal continuum in order to account for the structure of the universe in Joyce's works. Pousseur has offered a tentative definition of his musical work which involves the term "field of possibilities." In fact, this shows that he is prepared to borrow two extremely revealing technical terms from contemporary culture.
The notion of "field" is provided by physics and implies a revised vision of the classic relationship posited between cause and effect as a rigid, one-directional system: now a complex interplay of motive forces is envisaged, a configuration of possible events, a complete dynamism of structure. The notion of "possibility" is a philosophical canon which reflects a widespread tendency in contemporary science; the discarding of a static, syllogistic view of order, and a corresponding devolution of intellectual authority to personal decision, choice, and social context.

• LINES 465-473 after Domenick Ammirati, "Structure, Metaphor, Contemporary Art," *Art Lies* No. 68 (Spring/Summer 2011), cover:

Recently I read Bruno Latour's *We Have Never Been Modern*, from 1991. I'd gotten the sense from talking to my more intellectually conscientious friends that Latour had a lot to say about the current moment, which feels generally transitional; in particular, in art it seems an in-between time descended after the economic collapse, drawing to a close a period dominated in my mind by, on the one hand, salable neoformalist work (however intellectually justified, however imbricated in considerations of process, however good) and, on the other, attempts to (re)vivify political action in art (including the obsession with utopia and the obsession with pedagogy). The book's aim is to find a way beyond the impasse that became clear by the late 1980s / early '90s between obviously faltering modernity and a seemingly dead-end postmodernism. Given the passage of twenty years, one would think we had moved beyond this problem. But in fact the last decade's reinvestigations of modernism in art have merely served to reinscribe its visual lexicon. And I was intrigued to find parallels between Latour's 1991 and our (the art world's) 2011, since the livelier artwork I have seen people making in attempts to move forward recalls to me the late '80s/early '90s, with focuses on technology, the body and their interactions—the fate of personhood overall, in a mediatized age.

Latour seems to love breaking down knowledge into visual formats; *We Have Never Been Modern* features numerous tables and diagrams. While perusing them I realized that some of the centrally important diagrams resembled those in Rosalind Krauss' in ''Sculpture in the Expanded Field" (1979), produced in her now-canonical attempt to account for the efforts of artists ranging from Sol Lewitt to Robert Smithson who were developing work with new relationships to art and nature. Krauss explicitly cites the source for her diagramming method as the Klein group, common in the "human sciences." Presumably Latour, who is a 'human scientist', is familiar with the Klein group, so familiar as to have incorporated it into his own

methodology. In both Krauss and Latour, the goal is to deconstruct and expand upon a binary, and logically enough, the way to move beyond the pair of binary opposites is to *triangulate*. (The Klein group pursues this triangulate tack to form four triangles, whereas Latour stops at one.) It's obvious when you think about it in terms of simple geometry, and it invokes a baseline metaphor about the development of ideas. Two points in opposition form one axis. To get beyond them one adds a second *dimension*, the simplest structure of which is a triangle.

The methodology of this essay obeys the following geometry: a circle with tangents issuing from every point along its edge where the author adduces a new source. Metaphorically the figure implies motion while, of course, literally remaining static.

• LINES 475 to end by Dexter Sinister

1. „Identity“

Diese dreiteilige Projektion, die einesteils wie ein Informationsfilm, andernteils wie ein minimalistischer Comic wirkt, verfolgt die Entwicklung grafischer Identitäten über die letzten 150 Jahre. Insbesondere beleuchtet sie das angespannte Verhältnis, das sich zwischen Kultur und Wirtschaft entwickelte, als die Kunstinstitutionen zunehmend damit beschäftigt waren, sich ihr eigenes Image aufzubauen. Wie spiegeln neueste Änderungen in der grafischen Identität von Museen, Galerien und sogenannten alternativen Kunsträumen die Veränderungen in der institutionellen Politik und Strategie wider? „Identity“ arbeitet mit drei Fallstudien – dem Centre Pompidou in Paris, dem Museum of Modern Art in New York und der Tate Modern in London, um von diesem Ausgangspunkt zu einem umfassenderen Bild zu gelangen.

„Identity“ wurde von Stefán Kalmar und Richard Birkett vom Artists Space in New York in Auftrag gegeben und dort erstmals 2012 gezeigt. Zur Projektion gehörte ein Booklet mit dem Transkript eines Soundtracks, der vollständig aus gefundenen Texten zusammengestellt war. Da das Material gekürzt, paraphrasiert oder vollständig überarbeitet wurde, enthält das Booklet ein umfassendes Inventar von originalen Quellen – deshalb befinden sich am rechten Seitenrand die Referenzzahlen der Zeilen. Dieses Quellenmaterial umfasst so viel an umgebenden Text, dass es möglich wird, den vollständigen Sinn des Originals wiederherzustellen. Damit wird es zum zusätzlichen Lesestoff – um nicht zu sagen zu einer Copyright-Apologie.

Bestandteile sind hier das Audio-Skript und Quellnotizen, der Schriftsatz aus dem Original-Booklet, das im Rahmen weiterer Installationen von „Identity“ mehrfach neu aufgelegt wurde, so im Tramway, Glasgow (2012), dem Festival d’Affiches, Chaumont (2013), which passed through MCA Denver (2013), The Power Plant, Toronto (2013), and the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, MI (2014). sowie als Bestandteil der Gruppen-Wanderausstellung Postscript, Writing After Conceptual Art (2013). Dieselben Seiten stehen zum Download von www.servinglibrary.org zur Verfügung.

Part informational film, part minimalist cartoon, this three-screen projection tracks the development of graphic identities over the course of the last 150 years. In particular, it animates the fraught relationship between cultural and corporate spheres as art institutions become increasingly preoccupied with their own image. How do recent changes in the graphic identities of museums, galleries and so-called alternative spaces reflect the shifting landscape of institutional policy and strategy? “Identity” uses three case studies – the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, the Museum of Modern Art New York, and London’s Tate Modern – as coordinates from which to plot a broader landscape.

“Identity” was commissioned by Stefán Kalmar and Richard Birkett of Artists Space, New York, and first shown there in 2012. The projection was accompanied by a booklet with a transcript of the soundtrack, which is entirely compiled from found texts. As this material was liberally truncated, paraphrased, or entirely reworked, the booklet includes an exhaustive inventory of original sources – hence the reference line numbers in the script’s right-hand margin. This source material includes as much surrounding text as is necessary to reinstate the full sense of the doctored originals. As such, it also amounts to a pile of *further reading* – not to mention a de facto copyright apologia.

Included here are the audio script and source notes, typeset according to the original booklet, which has been republished alongside subsequent installations of ‘Identity’ at Tramway, Glasgow (2012), the Festival d’Affiches, Chaumont (2013), and as part of the traveling group exhibition Postscript, Writing After Conceptual Art (2013), which passed through MCA Denver (2013), The Power Plant, Toronto (2013), and the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, MI (2014). The same pages are also available to download from www.servinglibrary.org.

2

* TRUE MIRROR *

The first poem was the title poem.
This time Corinne read it aloud, but she still didn't hear it.
She read it through a third time and heard some of it.
She read it through a fourth time, and heard all of it.
It was a poem containing the lines:

        Not wasteland, but a great inverted forest
        with all foliage underground

As though it might be best to look immediately for shelter,
Corinne had to put the book down.
At any moment the apartment building seemed liable to lose
Its balance and topple across Fifth Avenue into Central Park.

She waited.
Gradually the deluge of truth and beauty abated.

Then New Years Eve of 2007 came:
We celebrated it with friends at a party
Where everybody was asked to wear
Exactly what they wore exactly one year before.

But all at once it dawned on me that this
Was the real point, the contrapuntal theme;
Just this: not text, but texture; not the dream
But topsy-turvical coincidence,
Not flimsy nonsense, but a web of sense.
Yes! It sufficed that I in life could find
Some kind of link-and-bobolink, some kind
Of correlated pattern in the game,
Plexed artistry, and something of the same
Pleasure in it as they who played it found.

They were made with an idea of seeing
Two realms at once. "Two games, yours and
The verso, an additional waiting to be played
In another time, another space."
A mirrored world, an unheralded parallel present.

--

It's an odd masterpiece,
A celebration of the River Rouge auto plant,
Which had succeeded the Highland Park factory
As Ford's industrial headquarters,
Painted by a Communist
For the son of a Capitalist
The north and south walls are devoted
To nearly life-size scenes in which
The plant's grey gears, belts, racks and workbenches
Surge and swarm like some vast intestinal apparatus.
The workers within might be subsidiary organs
Or might be lunch
As the whole churns to excrete a stream of black Fords.

Five Tyres abandoned and Five Tyres remoulded.
Proof of the fact that a mechanical device can
Reproduce personality
And that Quality is merely
The distribution aspect of Quantity.

Journalists have conquered the book form;
Writing is now the tiny affair of the individual;

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

The result is rapid turnover,
the regime of the best seller
But there will always be
A parallel circuit, a black market.

Being new is, in fact, often understood as
A combination of being different
And being recently-produced.
We call a car a new car if this car is different from other cars,
and at the same time the latest, most recent model.

But to be new is by no means the same as being different.
The new is a difference without difference,
Or a difference beyond difference,
A difference which we are unable to recognise.

For Kierkegaard, therefore,
The only medium for a possible emergence of the new
Is the ordinary, the "non-different", the identical --
Not the other, but the same.

--

Around the same time,
He mailed fifty postcards to friends and acquaintances
Showing two Boettis hand in hand, like twin brothers,
Defining and simultaneously nullifying a fictitious symbol,
An opposition that is not negated but transformed.

The 'e' -- the 'and' -- which Boetti placed
Between his Christian name and his given,
Indicated the multiplicity within the self,
Was a symbol of the distinction and difference
Between his two personas,
As well as their reprocity, conjunction and interdependence,
Marking a plus-one as well as a division:
A paradox at his very heart.

It is a matter of outwardly reflecting contact-lenses,
Which blind the one who wears them.
The contact-zone is not a filter:
The reflection is print, the senses are linked up.
To upset my own eyes
From the reviews:

> What worries many critics most is the fact
> That art seems to be alive and well,
> Not so much because of them
> But in spite of them.

And what do you do?
You just SIT there.

This kind of problem might have been posed by anyone since
Piero della Francesco
And its solution can be precisely foreseen.
Anticipated by Joyce's repeated, sardonic reference to
Dublin as Doublin'
A city marinated in narrative, and inescapably bound up with
Narrative's capability for reflection and duplicity.

It's not just a palindrome in a literal sense,
But also a physical one.
You can actually put a mirror in the middle of it
And it still reads the same.

--

Every mathematician agrees that
Every mathematician must know some
Set theory.
We have proved, in other words, that
        Nothing contains everything.
Or more spectacularly,
        There is no universe

The World As It Is And The World As It Could Be
The World As It Is And The World As It Could Be

Tattarrattat!
A Sun on USA!

Weightless and without energy,
Shadows still convey information
But the shadow's location cannot be detected until the light,

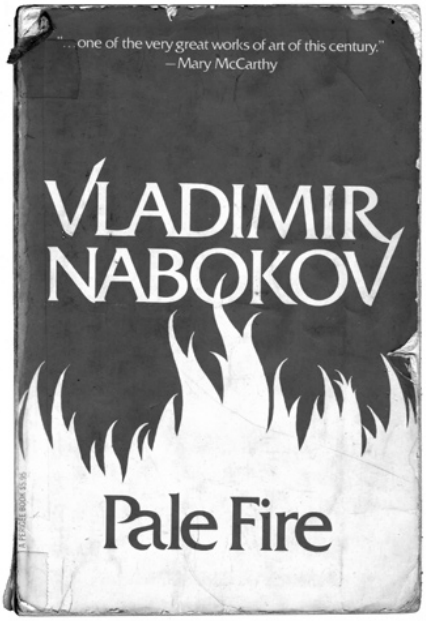
Moving at its ponderous relativistic pace, arrives.

It's quite easy to conjure
A faster-than-light shadow
(Or in theory, at least):
Build a great klieg light,
A superstrong version
Of the ones at the Academy Awards.
Now paste a piece of black paper
Onto the klieg's glass
So there's a shadow in the middle of the beam.
Like the signal that summons Batman
We will mount our light in space and
Broadcast the Bat-call to the cosmos.

And from the inside, too, I'd duplicate
Myself, my lamp, an apple on a plate:
Uncurtaining the night, I'd let dark glass
Hang all the furniture above the grass,
And how delightful when a fall of snow
Covered my glimpse of lawn and reached up so
As to make chair and bed exactly stand
Upon that snow, out in that crystal land!

LINES 1–13 : J.D. Salinger, "The Inverted Forest", *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, 1947

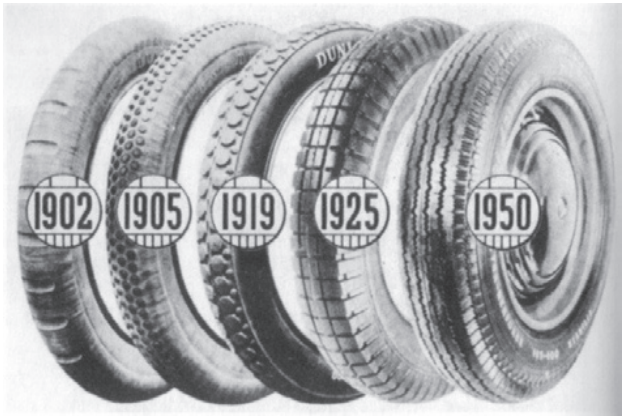
LINES 14–17 : Email from Raimundas Malašauskas, Friday June 15, 2007
LINES 18–27 : Vladimir Nabokov, *Pale Fire*, 1962

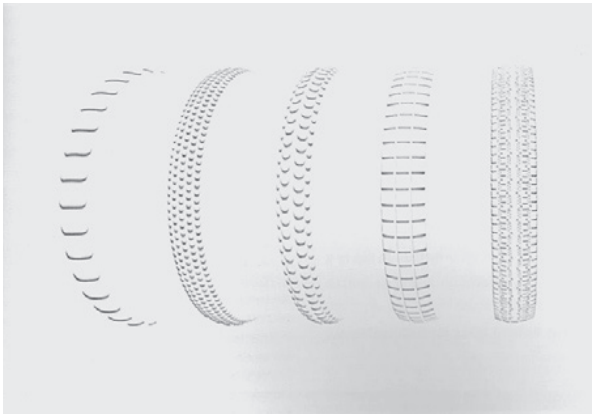


LINES 28–32 : Ryan Gander, *Parallel Cards*, 2006

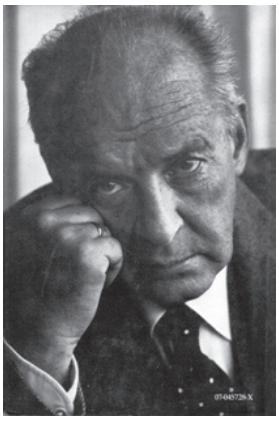
LINES 33–45 : Rebecca Solnit, "Detroit Arcadia", *Harper's Magazine*, June 2007

LINE 46 : Richard Hamilton, *Five Tyres abandoned, 1964, Five Tyres remoulded*, 1971



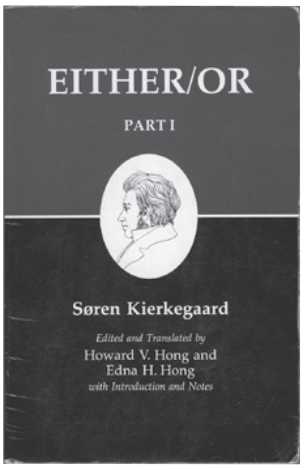


LINES 47–50 : Vladimir Nabokov, *Bend Sinister*,1947

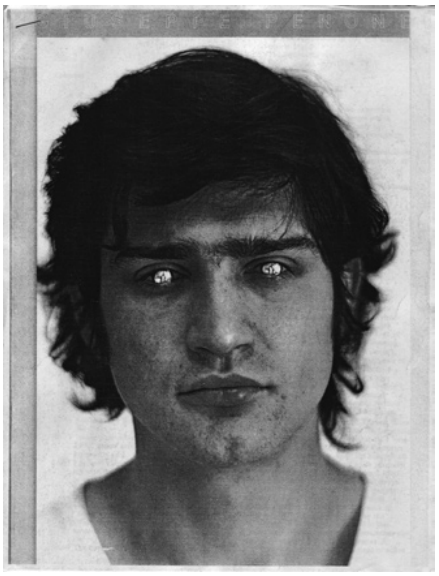


LINES 51–59 : Gilles Deleuze, "L'abécédaire", 1988

LINES 60–72 : Boris Groys paraphrasing Søren Kierkergaard, *On The New*, 2002



LINES 73–85 : Bettina Funcke, "Urgency", Continuous Project #8, 2007
LINES 86–90 : Giuseppe Penone, "To Upset My Own Eyes", *Exhibition catalog for Trees Eyes Hairs Walls Vases*, 1970



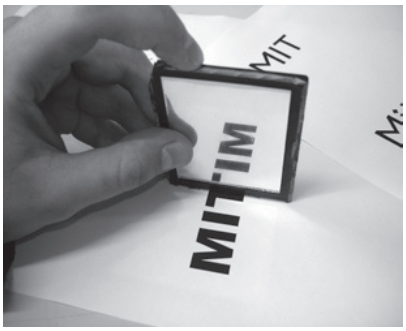
LINE 91 : Paul R. Halmos, *Naive Set Theory*, 1960
LINES 92–95 : Alex Klein, "Critical Responses to the 2002 Whitney Biennial", *The Blow Up*, 2002

LINES 96–97 : Michael Bracewell, "A Prose Kinema, Some notes for Pale Carnage", Arnolfini, Bristol, 2007

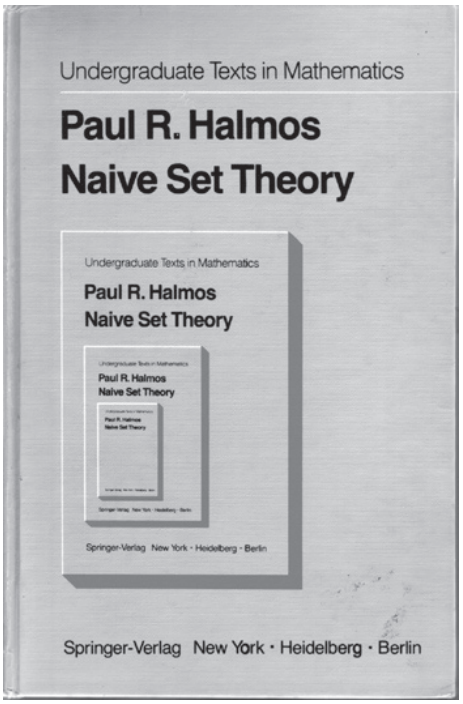
LINES 98–100 : Richard Hamilton, *Collected Words*, 1982

LINES 101–104 : William J. Mitchell, “Electronic Doublin”, *Archis 2*, 2002

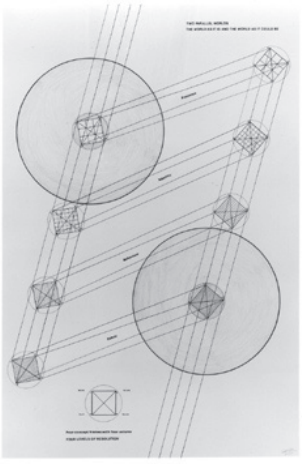
LINES 105–108 : Ryan Gander, “Little Bastard”, *Dot Dot Dot 12*, 2006



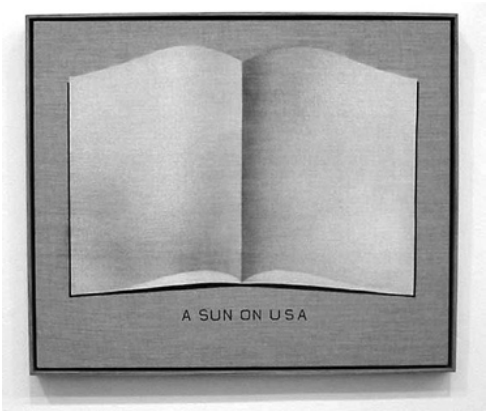
LINES 109–115 : Paul R. Halmos, *Naive Set Theory*, 1960



LINES 116–117 : Stephan Willats, *The World As It Is And The World As It Could Be*, 2006



LINE 118 : James Joyce, *Ulysses,* 1922
LINE 119 : Ed Ruscha, *A Sun on USA,* 2002



LINES 120–135 : Margaret Wertheim, "The Shadow Goes", *New York Times Op-Ed*, Wednesday June 20, 2007

The Shadow Goes

By Margaret Wertheim

LOS ANGELES

ON Thursday, on the summer solstice, the Sun will celebrate the year's lazy months by resting on the horizon. The word solstice derives from the Latin "sol" (sun) and "sistere" (to stand still). The day marks the sun's highest point in the sky, the moment when our shadows shrink to their shortest length of the year. How strange to think that these mundane friends, our ever-present familiars, can actually go faster than the sun's rays.

I remarked on this recently to my husband as we sat on the porch with our shadows pooling by our chairs. Nothing can go faster than light, he insisted, expressing what is surely the most widely known law of physics, ingrained into us by a thousand "Nova" programs.

That is the point, I explained. Nothing can go faster than light. A shadow isn't a thing. It's a non-thing. It's the absence of light.

Special relativity dictates that we cannot move anything more quickly than the particles of light known as photons, but no law says you can't do *nothing* faster than light. Physicists have known this for a long time, even if they generally do not mention it on PBS documentaries.

My husband looked troubled, as did my sister and some friends I regaled with the story that evening. Only the warp drive on "Star Trek," faster-than-light travel is supposed to be a science-fiction fantasy. Isn't it?

They are right about the travel: According to relativity, no physical substance can exceed the speed of light because it would take infinite energy to accelerate anything to such a velocity.

Yet the laws of physics pertain only to that which is. That which *isn't* is not bound by relativity's restraint. From the point of view of relativity, a shadow (having no mass) is a non-thing, an existential void.

It's quite easy to conjure up a faster-than-light shadow, at least in theory. Build a great klieg light, a superstrong version of the ones set up at the Academy Awards. Now paste a piece of black paper onto the klieg's glass so there is a shadow in the middle of the beam, like the signal used to summon Batman. And we are going to mount our light in space and broadcast the Bat-call to the cosmos.

The key to our trick is to rotate the klieg. As the light turns, the bat shadow sweeps across the sky. Round and round it goes, projecting into the void. Just as the rim of a bicycle wheel moves faster than its hub, so too, away from the source our bat shadow will fly faster and faster, a consequence of the geometry that guarantees the rim of a really big wheel moves faster than a co-rotating small wheel.

At a great enough distance from the source, our shadow bat will go so fast it will exceed the speed of light. This does not violate relativity because a shadow carries no energy. Literally nothing is transferred. Our shadow bat can go 10 times the speed of light or 100 times faster without breaking any of physics' sacred rules.

The shade cast by the solstice can go faster than light.

My sister leapt to the heart of this apparent paradox: Why isn't the light itself traveling faster than the speed of light? Isn't it also rotating in space? Actually, no. The bulbs that produce the light are spinning, but the light particles leave the source at 186,000 miles a second, the vaunted "speed of light." Once emitted, the photons continue to travel at this speed directly away from the source. Only the shadow revolves around the great circle. The critical point is that no object, no substance, defies light.

My husband was right to object that you'd need one spectacular klieg to produce a detectable shadow thousands of miles out in space. Still, the theory is sound.

The anthropologist Mary Douglas noted that all systems of categorizing break down somewhere, unable to incorporate certain forms. By standing beyond relativity's injunction, shadows suggest the limits of all classification schemes, a tension that even modern science cannot completely resolve.

In the terms recognized by relativity, shadows are non-things. Yet before the invention of clocks, shadows were the most important means for telling time. Weightless and without energy, shadows can nonetheless convey information — though they cannot, despite our giant klieg, be used for faster-than-light communication. That's because the shadow's location cannot be detected until the light, moving at its ponderous relativistic pace, arrives.

"Here there be monsters," said the medieval maps, signaling the limits of reason's reach. As a map of being, physics is flanked by the monsters of non-being whose outlines we glimpse in the paradoxes of quantum mechanics and in the looming arc of a shadow bat going faster than light.

In Christian theology we are told, "God is that which nothing is greater than." The scientific corollary might be, "Light is that which nothing is faster than" — a statement true both in spirit and fact. □

Margaret Wertheim, the director of the Institute for Figuring, a science and mathematics education organization, is writing a book on physics and the imagination.

TimesSelect: Paul Krugman: Money Talks The columnist responds to readers' complaints, praise and questions on his recent columns: nytimes.com/krugman. **Join the Conversation** Readers can send columnists their comments: nytimes.com/timesselect.

LINES 136–143 : Vladimir Nabakov, *Pale Fire*, 1962

Whitney

Doublin, 7 January 2008

Dear cooperator,

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

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

Proof of the fact that a mechanical device can
Reproduce personality
And that Quality is merely
The distribution aspect of Quantity.
Journalists have conquered the book form;
Writing is now the tiny affair of the individual;
The customers have changed: television's aren't viewers,
but advertisers; publishing's not potential readers,
but distributors.
The result is rapid turnover,
The regime of the bestseller
But there will always be
A parallel circuit, a black market.

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

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

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

For now,

Dexter Sinister

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

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

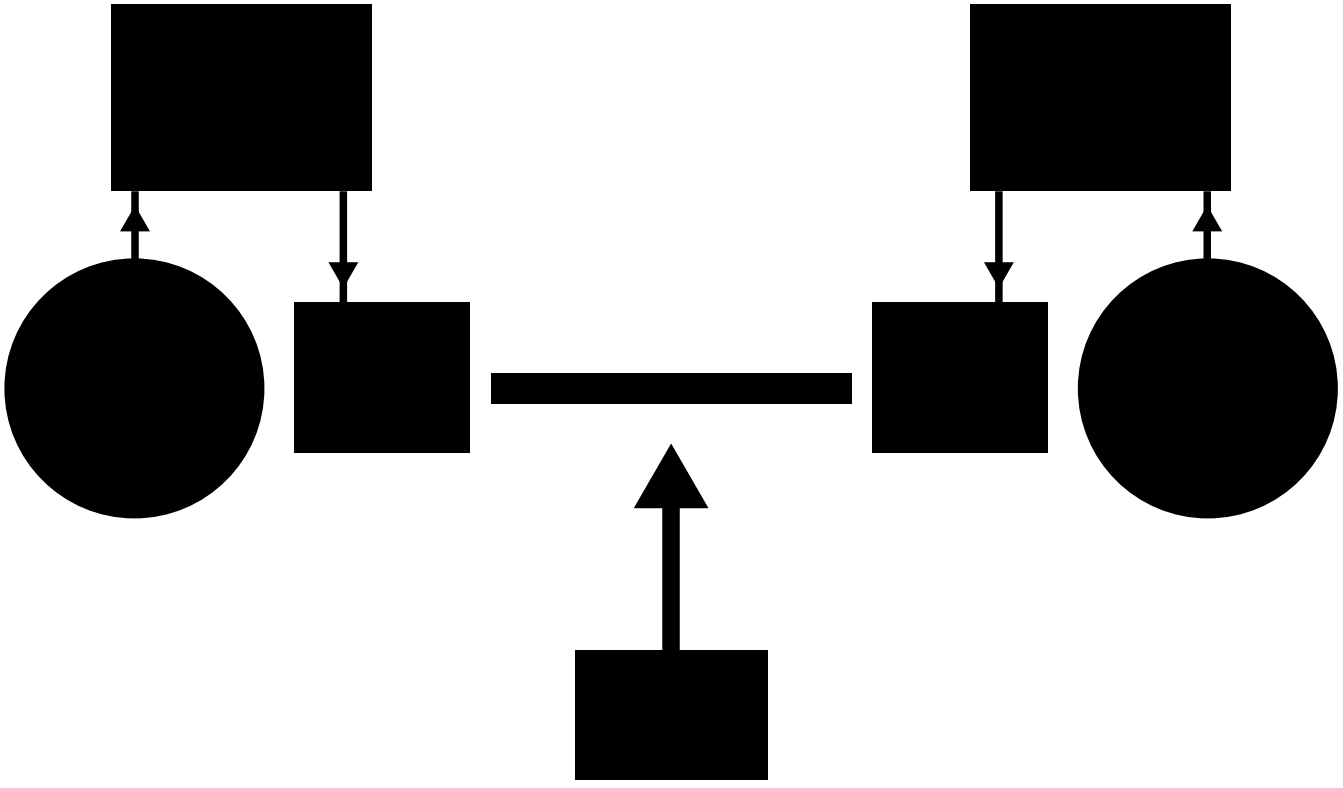
Starting from the 2008 Whitney Biennial press preview, Dexter Sinister plan to set up a temporary information office at the 7th Regiment Armory building. Over the following 3 weeks while the Armory operates as a shadow site for the exhibition, DS will issue a series of press releases through multiple distribution channels -- variously commissioning, designing, editing and releasing texts parallel to the regular biennial PR.

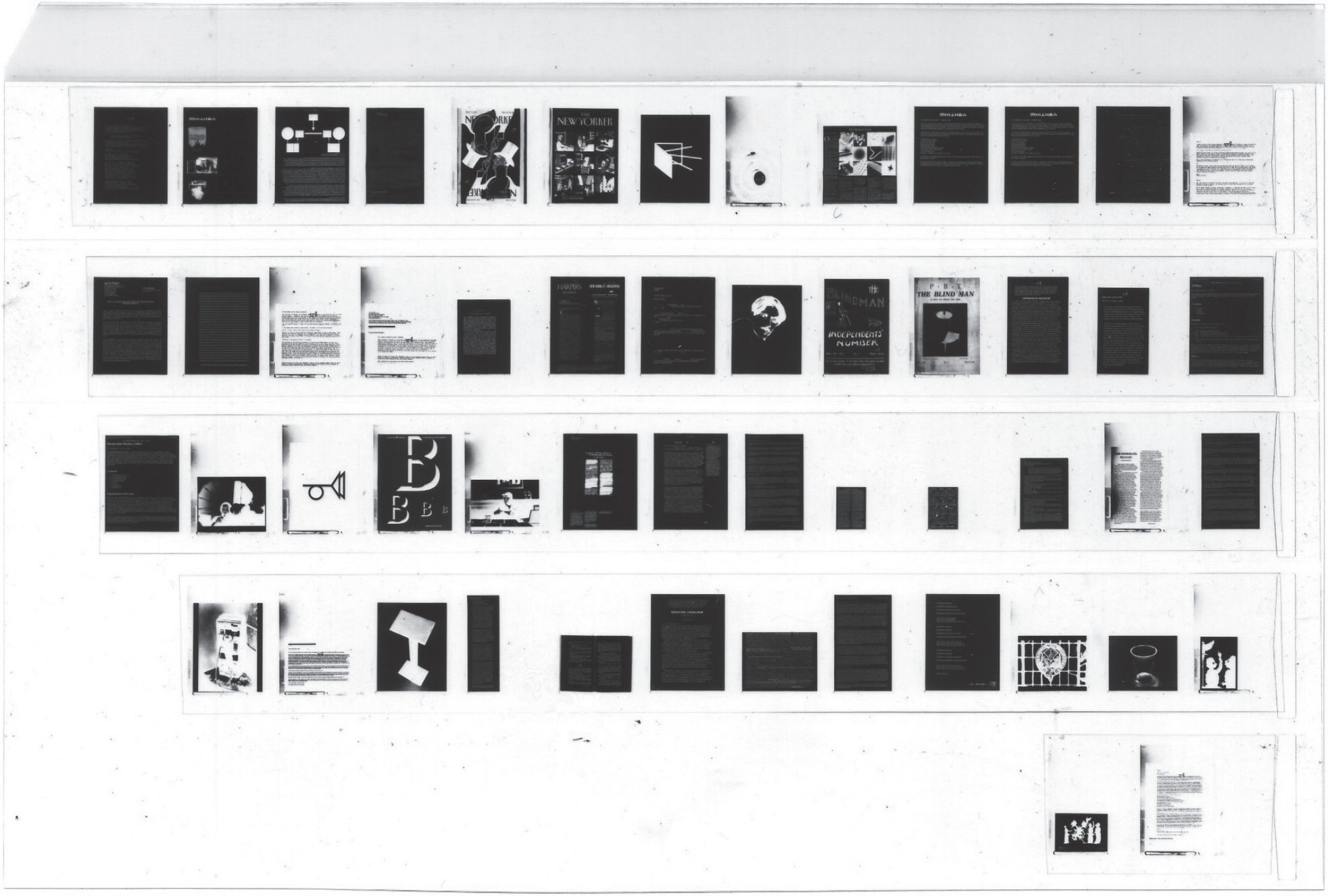
The press release is a form whose distribution aspect is already inscribed. Typically compressed into a series of literal sound-bites on a single sheet of paper, they are designed to be easily re-purposed -- copied, pasted, combined and inserted back into other media streams. By adopting this form, existing information pathways could provide a fluid channel for dispersing alternate and multiple points-of-view, both found and newly-commissioned. Where most press texts are written with an obvious vested interest -- just as any published text comes framed by the context of its publisher (whether it likes it or not) -- these releases will exist without an editorial umbrella, or at least one obtuse enough to resist contamination. Further, the specific nature of each contribution will precisely determine the form of its distribution channel. In other words, *The message, plus its resultant form, multiplied by the channel of distribution, divided by the context of its reception, equals the substance of its communication.* The forms could be equally commonplace (a group email or fax) or sophisticated (a private phone call or reactive concerto for muted trumpet.) Allowing the process of channeling to unfold over 3 weeks, the intention is to slow down the typically immediate consumption of the biennial project.

In addition, four small Armory projects are proposed in advance of the 3 week residence, to act as signals towards a reading of the activities to come. These are equally considered as "releases," but already in place for the press preview. The signals are: 1. PUBLIC PHONES -- the 3 ground floor public phones rewired to carry live or pre-recorded texts, serving as one very local distribution channel; 2. TRUE MIRRORS -- custom-built True Mirrors installed in all publicly-accessible Armory restrooms; 3. KLIEG LIGHT -- a spotlight based on the description by Margaret Wertheim in her *New York Times* Op-Ed piece, June 20, 2007: *It's quite easy to conjure up a faster-than-light shadow, at least in theory. Build a great klieg light, a . . . version of the ones set up at the Academy Awards. Now paste a piece of black paper onto the klieg's glass so there is a shadow in the middle of the beam, like the signal used to summon Batman . . . The key to our trick is to rotate the klieg . . . At a great enough distance from the source, our shadow . . . will go so fast it will exceed the speed of light.* This pure signal can function as both sign and release -- a marker of the Armory's location and its shadow relation to the Whitney Museum ten blocks away; and 4. PRIVATE ROOM (Commander's room/Colonel's dressing room) -- working from this hidden room for the duration, the visible Commander's room door will remain locked, and the office accessible only by pressing the panel and releasing the door. DS are listed as occupying this space, but there should be no announcement of this as "hidden" or "secret." The public may access the room by the panel, though again, the existence of this button should not be announced; the fact that the operation is out of sight is of little consequence, or at least without any explicit claim to performance.

It is critical to this proposal that the resources required to operate autonomously and efficiently are provided up-front. (Timing is everything with press releases, professionals assure us.) First, a budget for the upfront projects needs to be secured, as well as obvious contact resources including the biennial email, postal mail and broadcast-fax lists. Then, a separate operating budget should be arranged for the 3-week period that would cover writers' (or, equally, performers') fees, reproduction and distribution costs. On the conclusion of this 3 weeks, a close reader, collecting the accumulated press releases, may form a composite, alternate reading of the biennial. And perhaps more effectively, the echoes of these releases could continue to resonate through other media channels as the releases are re-released, circulated and distorted long after the show closes. The result may be a time-delayed shadow, or even refracted image, of the event rendered indistinct by its own circulation. And remember:

Quality is merely the distribution aspect of quantity.
Quantity is merely the distribution aspect of quality.




THE NEW YORKER
THE BLIND MAN
INDEPENDENTS NUMBER
P · B · T
THE BLIND MAN

WHITNEY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 4 MARCH 2008

As the first of a series of reflections on the 2008 Whitney Biennial, Dexter Sinister has staged a rotating spotlight near the entrance to the 7th Regiment Armory building (Park Avenue at 67th Street), marking the parallel site of the exhibition. This will be present during the opening nights of Tuesday 4 March and Wednesday 5 March only, operating from 7pm onwards.

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

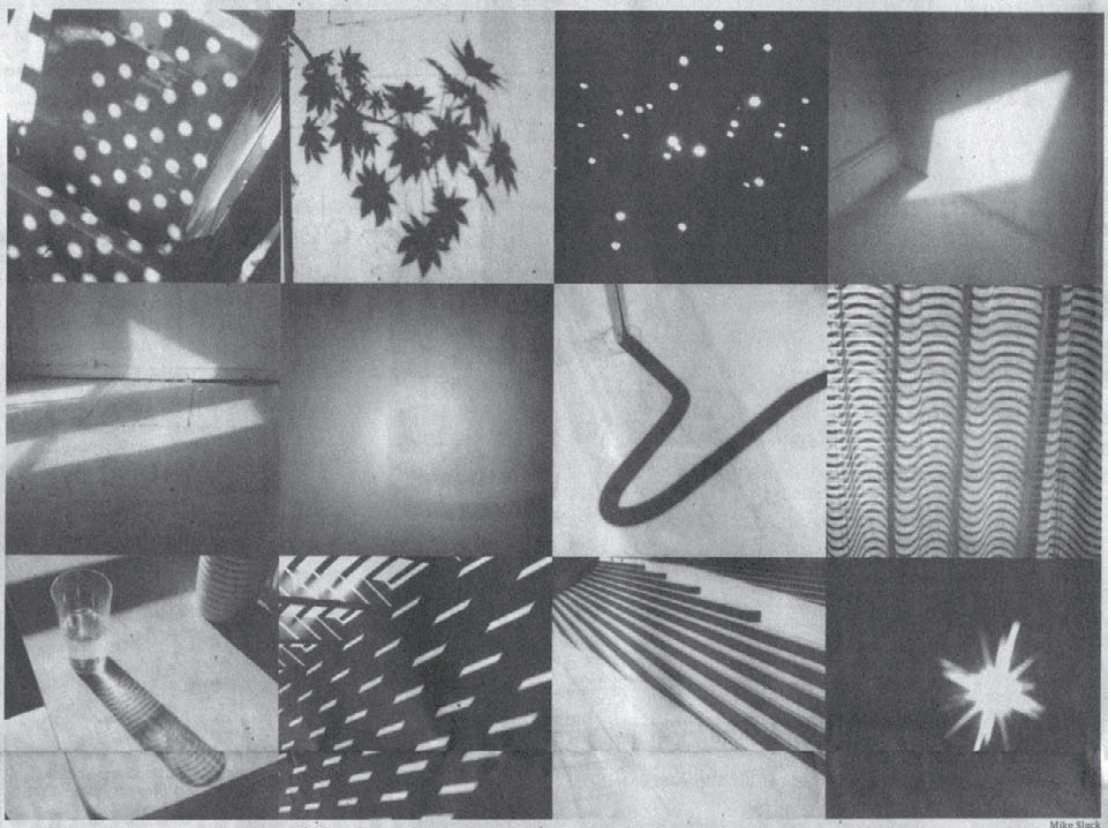
It's quite easy to conjure
A faster-than-light shadow
(Or in theory, at least):
Build a great klieg light,
A superstrong version
Of the ones at the Academy Awards.
Now paste a piece of black paper
Onto the klieg's glass
So there's a shadow in the middle of the beam.

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

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

The Shadow Goes

By Margaret Wertheim



Mike Slack

LOS ANGELES

ON Thursday, on the summer solstice, the Sun will celebrate the year's lazy months by resting on the horizon. The word solstice derives from the Latin "sol" (sun) and "sistere" (to stand still). The day marks the sun's highest point in the sky, the moment when our shadows shrink to their shortest length of the year. How strange to think that these mundane friends, our ever-present familiars, can actually go faster than the sun's rays.

I remarked on this recently to my husband as we sat on the porch with our shadows pooling by our chairs. Nothing can go faster than light, he insisted, expressing what is surely the most widely known law of physics, ingrained into us by a thousand "Nova" programs.

That is the point, I explained: Nothing can go faster than light. A shadow isn't a thing. It's a non-thing. It's the absence of light.

Special relativity dictates that we cannot move anything more quickly than the particles of light known as photons, but no law says you can't do *nothing* faster than light. Physicists have known this for a long time, even if they generally do not mention it on PBS documentaries.

My husband looked troubled, as did my sister and some friends I regaled with the story that evening. Like the warp drive on "Star Trek," faster-than-light travel is supposed to be a science-fiction fantasy. Isn't it?

They are right about the travel: According to relativity, no physical substance can exceed the speed of light because it would take infinite energy to accelerate anything to such a velocity.

Yet the laws of physics pertain only to that which is. That which *isn't* is not bound by relativity's restraint. From the point of view of relativity, a shadow (having no mass) is a non-thing, an existential void.

It's quite easy to conjure up a faster-than-light shadow, at least in theory. Build a great klieg light, a superstrong version of the ones set up at the Academy Awards. Now paste a piece of black paper onto the klieg's glass so there is a shadow in the middle of the beam, like the signal used to summon Batman. And we are going to mount our light in space and broadcast the Bat-call to the cosmos.

The key to our trick is to rotate the klieg. As the light turns, the bat shadow sweeps across the sky. Round and round it goes, projecting into the void. Just as the rim of a bicycle wheel moves faster than its hub, so too, away from the source our bat shadow will fly faster and faster, a consequence of the geometry that guarantees the rim of a really big wheel moves faster than a co-rotating small wheel.

At a great enough distance from the source, our shadow bat will go so fast it will exceed the speed of light. This does not violate relativity because a shadow carries no energy. Literally nothing is transferred. Our shadow bat can go 10 times the speed of light or 100 times faster without breaking any of physics' sacred rules.

> The shade cast by the solstice can go faster than light.

My sister leapt to the heart of this apparent paradox: Why isn't the light itself traveling faster than the speed of light? Isn't it also rotating in space? Actually, no. The bulbs that produce the light are spinning, but the light particles leave the source at 186,000 miles a second, the vaunted "speed of light." Once emitted, the photons continue to travel at this speed directly away from the source. Only the shadow revolves around the great circle. The critical point is that no object, no substance, defies light.

My husband was right to object that you'd need one spectacular klieg to produce a detectable shadow thousands of miles out in space. Still, the theory is sound.

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In the terms recognized by relativity, shadows are non-things. Yet before the invention of clocks, shadows were the most important means for telling time. Weightless and without energy, shadows can nonetheless convey information — though they cannot, despite our giant klieg, be used for faster-than-light communication. That's because the shadow's location cannot be detected until the light, moving at its ponderous relativistic pace, arrives.

"Here there be monsters," said the medieval maps, signaling the limits of reason's reach. As a map of being, physics is flanked by the monsters of non-being whose outlines we glimpse in the paradoxes of quantum mechanics and in the zooming arc of a shadow bat going faster than light.

In Christian theology we are told, "God is that which nothing is greater than." The scientific corollary might be, "Light is that which nothing is faster than" — a statement true both in spirit and fact. □

Margaret Wertheim, the director of the Institute for Figuring, a science and mathematics education organization, is writing a book on physics and the imagination.

TimesSelect: Paul Krugman: Money Talks The columnist responds to readers' complaints, praise and questions on his recent columns: nytimes.com/krugman. **Join the Conversation** Readers can send columnists their comments: nytimes.com/timesselect.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 4 MARCH 2008

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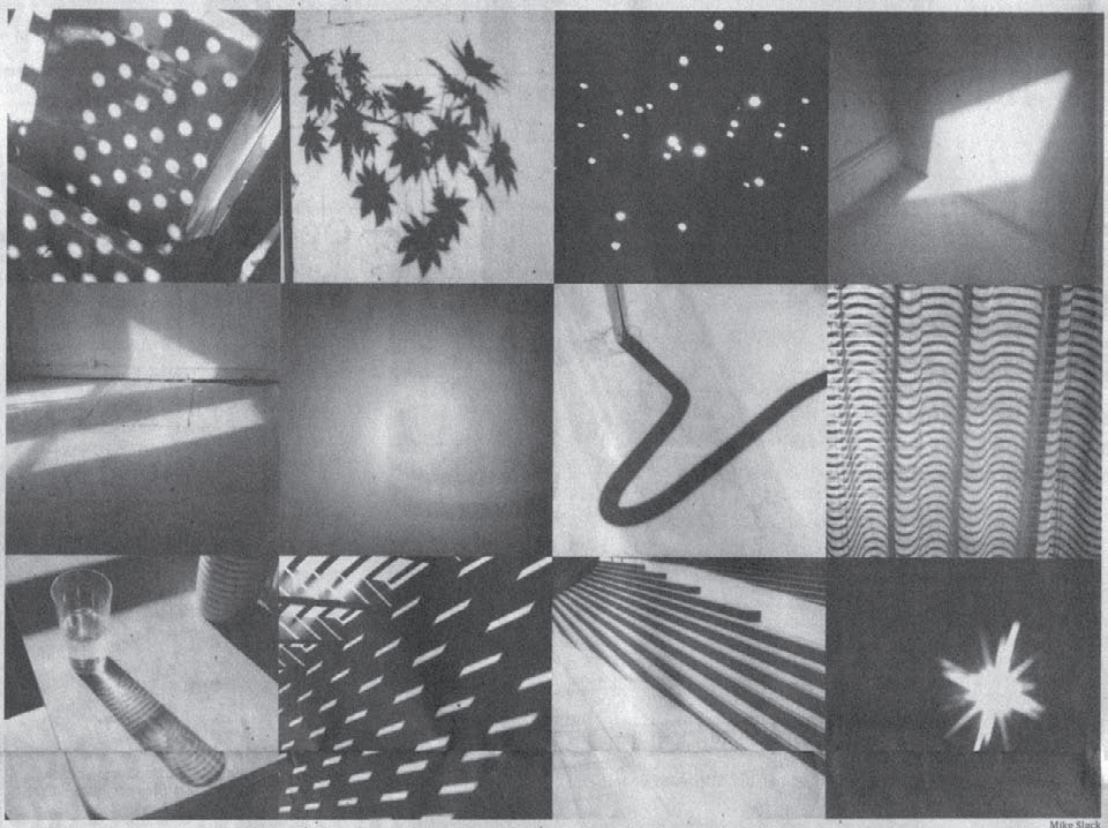

Mike Slack

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2. True Mirror

Dieses facettenreiche und umfassende Projekt begann mit dem Beitrag von Dexter Sinister zur Whitney Biennale von 2008. Der Name bezieht sich auf einen speziellen Spiegel, der im Gegensatz zur üblichen Rechts-Links-Spiegelverkehrtheit eine „wahre" Spiegelung der Welt gewährleistet. Statt ein Spiegelbild zu produzieren, wirft der wahre Spiegel die Spiegelung dieses Spiegelbilds zurück und liefert damit das wahre Abbild, wie jemand von anderen gesehen wird. In den ersten drei Wochen der Biennale besetzten Dexter Sinister einen versteckten Raum hinter einer Wand in der Ausstellung und produzierten zusammen mit zahlreichen Mitarbeitern „Presseerklärungen".

„Presseerklärungen" war der Oberbegriff für eine Reihe unterschiedlicher Reflexionen über die gerade laufende Ausstellung. Ziel war es, die Rezeption der Biennale zu erschweren oder zu verlangsamen, indem etwas produktiver „Lärm" in die üblichen PR-Kanäle geschleust wurde. Jede Erklärung war ein Unikat, das über einen spezifischen Kanal verbreitet wurde, der dem jeweiligen Beitrag entsprach. Darunter fanden sich so vielfältige Formate wie Gerüchte, eine musikalische Komposition und ein höchst ungewöhnlicher singender Fahrstuhlführer. All diese wurden gleichzeitig auf www.sinisterdexter.org verfolgt, wo das Material online weiterhin verfügbar ist.

Die komplette Produktion wurde im Folgenden in ein einzelnes Behältnis-Format überführt: Ein bescheidenes Mikrofiche-Archiv mit 37 Symbolen, die für jeweils eine vollendete Presseerklärung des Projekts stehen. Hinzu kamen noch verschiedene ergänzende Kleinigkeiten und Stücke. Die Mikrofiche-Folien wurden als Hintergrund und Partitur für eine live aufgeführte „Dokumenten-Oper" namens True Mirror Microfiche projiziert. Hier wurden die originalen Presseerklärungen zu einem neuen Ganzen zusammengestellt und von einer riesigen Truppe – darunter viele der ursprünglich Mitwirkenden von True Mirror – als Performance aufgeführt. Die Erstaufführung war am 25. November 2008 in The Kitchen in New York. Einige Monate später, am 30. Mai 2009, folgte eine „Spiegelbildversion" am ICA in London.

Weitere Ableger umfassen ein Video, das Footage-Material von dem ICA-Event zusammenstellt, zwei Editionen eines Print-on-Demand-Buchs mit den jeweiligen Skripten der New Yorker und Londoner Performances sowie eine Vinyl-Schallplatte mit zwei der originalen Audio-Veröffentlichungen. Die folgenden drei Dokumente, deren Layout den Originalen entsprechen, wurden im Vorfeld der dreiwöchigen Live-Produktion produziert und veröffentlicht. Sie vermitteln ein Bild, welche Entwicklungen im Denken im Kontext der breit gestreuten Themen stattgefunden haben, die schließlich in True Mirror und seine nachfolgenden Weiterentwicklungen mündeten. Das erste ist ein langes „Gedicht", das aus gefundenen Texten (und einigen Referenzbildern) collagiert wurde. Es verfolgt die Absicht, einige der frei flottierenden Ideen über die möglichen Themen des Projekts zu sammeln und in diesem ungeformten Zustand den Kuratoren als Vorschlag zu unterbreiten. Das zweite ist ein etwas späterer Update desselben Gedankens: Es basiert auf einem Diagramm des Cybernetic-Gurus Claude Shannon und zeigt, wie Lärm Kommunikation erschwert. Im Vorfeld eines Meetings wurde es per Fax in das Büro der Biennale geschickt. Das dritte ist ein Brief, der dazu entworfen wurde, um eine Gruppe potenzieller Mitarbeiter zu überreden, eine „Presseerklärung" für das Projekt zu machen. Geschrieben werden musste vor Ort auf einer IBM-Kugelkopf-Schreibmaschine; dann musste der Text kopiert und von einer Postadresse in Dublin an etwa 40 Leute geschickt werden.

2. True Mirror

This multifarious, sprawling project started life as Dexter Sinister's contribution to the 2008 Whitney Biennial. It is named after a particular mirror that offers a 'true' reflection of the world in place of the usual left/right inversion. Instead of a 'mirror image', the true mirror bounces back a mirror of that mirror image and so shows how you appear to other people. For the first three weeks of the Biennial, Dexter Sinister occupied a hidden room behind a wall in the exhibition and produced a series of 'press releases' together with a large constellation of collaborators .

'Press release' was the nominal term for a series of diverse reflections on that year's exhibition. The aim was to complicate or slow down the Biennial's reception by adding a bit of productive *noise* into its usual PR channels. Each release was given a unique form, then distributed via a specific channel according to the contribution. They included formats as diverse as a rumour, a musical composition, and an unusually vocal elevator operator, all simultaneously tracked at www.sinisterdexter.org, where they remain online.

The entire production was subsequently compressed into one single container format: a modest archival microfiche containing 37 icons, each representing one of the project's completed releases, plus a few supplementary bits and pieces. The fiche was projected as the backdrop and score for a live 'documents opera' called True Mirror Microfiche, in which the original releases were assembled into a new whole and performed by a large cast including many of True Mirror's original contributors. This first took place at The Kitchen, New York, on 25 November 2008, followed a few months later by a 'mirror-image' version at the ICA, London, on 30 May 2009.

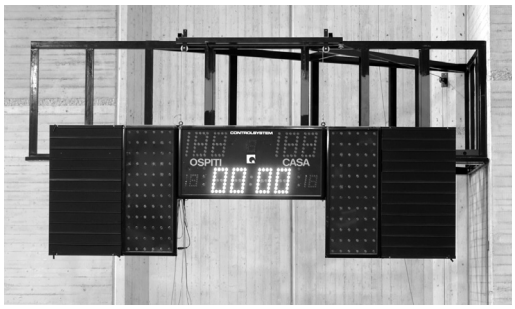
Further offshoots include a video compiled from footage at the ICA event; two editions of a print-on-demand book with the respective scripts of the New York and London performances; and a vinyl record with two of the original audio releases.

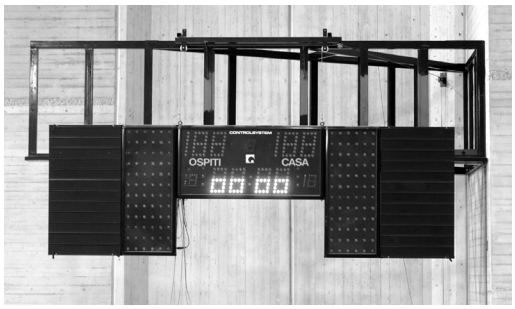
The first three documents on the previous pages, typeset according to the originals, were produced and distributed in advance of the live three-week production. They trace the development of thinking about and around the broad themes that fed into True Mirror and its subsequent incarnations. The first is a long 'poem' collaged from found texts (along with a set of reference images) in order to collect some free-ranging ideas about the project's potential themes, and to propose such unformed thoughts to its curators. The second is a slightly later update of this line of thinking based on a diagram that shows how noise impedes communication by cybernetics guru Claude Shannon, which was sent by fax to the Biennial office in advance of a meeting. The third is a letter designed to coax a pool of potential collaborators to write a 'press release' for the project, written in situ on an IBM golfball typewriter then copied and sent to forty or so individuals from a Dublin postal address.

Also included here are [MICROFICHE?], and the first two near-identical Press Releases distributed on the Biennial's opening night. Each claims that a giant klieg spotlight will project skyward from one of the Biennial's two venues (located about 10 blocks apart). The idea was thus designed to circulate via the immaterial channel of a rumour.

SOLSTICE

STAGING of Dexter Sinister's The Last ShOt Clock,
a two-sided incantation/talk written to conjure a party
inadvertently missed one year ago





Precisely one year past at the 55th Venice Biennial
As part of the joint Cypriot-Lithuanian pavilion
Which was titled big-O small-o, and equally small-o big-O,
Depending on your point of view (depending on your point of view).

We were asked to participate 'as honorary Lithuanians'
By Raimundas Malašauskas, who assembled the whole show
In the Brutalist Palasport – a monumental sports hall with
A central court for basketball flanked by rows of concrete bleachers.

Our idea was then to hijack the court's two opposing scoreboards
And turn them into dual clocks (though you'd never see both at once).
These clocks would count time not by means of normal decimal numbers,
But using big-Os and small-os, that binary character set.

We sent along instructions to the scoreboard's manufacturer
To burn a microchip that would alter its usual function
And reprogram the system to display this maladjusted time,
Then we called it *Work-in-Progress* – in order to be continued…

Doors open 10:30 pm
Event begins 11 pm SHARP

CAC
Vokiečių 2, Vilnius
www.cac.lt

21.6

XII Baltic Triennial

PREFACE

The Last ShOt Clock is an incantation for two speakers, D and S, to be read from opposite ends of a space on the cusp of Summer Solstice, 20/21 June.

It is based on a pair of eccentric digital clocks made for the joint Lithuania/Cyprus pavilion at the 2013 Venice Biennal. Back then, we had no real idea why we were making these clocks. They weren't made in response to a particular invitation, nor did they otherwise serve any specific function; we simply had the urge to see them exist, and so insinuated ourselves into the show. Slowly, though, an initially free-floating idea assembled itself into a time-travelling talk and an exhibition-of-sorts, and this backwards narrative became a key theme of both.

For this inaugural iteration at CAC Vilnius in 2014, the space in question was a marble-paved outdoor courtyard on the institution's first floor. We also installed 24 pieces of work, by ourselves and others on the interior walls surrounding this courtyard. These works (hung in groups of four according to the arrangement on page 14 here) loosely address the same broad themes. These artifactual footnotes to the main event then remained on the walls for the remainder of the summer.

The incantation begins with a piece of music played extremely loud in the empty courtyard at around 11pm. The courtyard is approaching darkness, lit only by the moon and the red LEDs of the two clocks hung opposite each other to mimic the scoreboards in the Venice Palasport. The track's refrain: 'There's always work / In progress / You're always in / Work in progress'. It plays on repeat for as long as it takes for an audience to gather.

Four more pieces of music punctuate the rest of the hour. Each one is introduced by an improvised (or at least non-scripted) description of the piece, along with reference to the fact that they all employ unorthodox time signatures – they are aural, abstract equivalents to both the stuff hanging on the walls, and the stories being recounted.

D and S install themselves each below one of the two clocks, then speak from that spot for the duration. The four NARRATIVE parts are read by both – one immediately after the other, half a line at a time (e.g. D says: 'Precisely one year past at the'. D repeats it. Then S says: '55th Venice Biennial'. D repeats it, and so on). This is intended to accentuate the meter and make sure nothing gets missed. In the script, the narrative parts are set in 16-line stanzas divided into 4 verses, with line breaks (/) and caesuras (|) to facilitate easier reading based on the rhythm and repetition.

Although written to the same meter, the 16 ANECDOTAL parts are set in paragraphs, the four verses divided by 'control' marks ( ) without further distinguishing the syllabic lines. The idea is to enunciate these parts according to the ebb and flow of meaning as opposed to the regular pulse of the meter. Each anecdote is a numbered 'point' counting down from 15 to 0 (in line with the clocks' reverse hexadecimal sequence), and these are read out along with each part's title. D and S alternately read the parts (as indicated by the letter in parentheses after each point's heading).

Between these two forms of delivery, one emphasizing structure, the other substance, ideally the audience will apprehend an underlying pattern without becoming distracting from what's being spoken; a sense that the evening is in the grip of a structure, but – as with the clocks – the precise nature of that structure is, for the time being, elusive.

Finally, there are two moments of 'rupture'. The first occurs halfway through (before point 7): the clocks are stopped while D or S explains the workings of this particular clock system (again semi-improvised, unscripted). The second rupture occurs at the end: the clocks are halted again while one of us explains the composition of the piece of music about to be played in conclusion. Then they are set off again, now advancing in perfect sync with our 'Theme from The Last ShOt Clock' which plays for the final 17 minutes – until around 00:00.

('Ya Wanner' by The Fall, 2005, 05:02, on repeat)

Precisely one year past at the | 55th Venice Biennial /
As part of the double Cyprus | -Lithuania pavilion /
Which was titled big-O small-o, | and equally small-o big-O, /
Depending on your point of view | (depending on your point of view).

We were asked to participate | 'as honorary Lithuanians' /
By Raimundas Malašauskas, | who assembled the whole show /
In the Brutalist Palasport | – a monumental sports hall with /
A central court for basketball | flanked by rows of concrete bleachers.

Our idea was then to hijack | the court's two opposing scoreboards /
And turn them into dual clocks | (though you'd never see both at once). /
These clocks would count time not by means | of normal decimal numbers, /
But using big-Os and small-os, | that binary character set.

We sent along instructions | to the scoreboard's manufacturer /
To burn a microchip that would | alter its usual function /
And reprogram the system to | display this maladjusted time, /
Then we called it *Work-in-Progress* – | in order to be continued …

POINT 15. PROGRAMMED ART (D)

Just over 50 years ago, the artist Bruno Munari organized an exhibition for Milan firm Olivetti in their brand new Venice showroom, where in place of calculators was an exhibition of art that was produced by programming. The artworks were much like machines – made with motors, lights and mirrors, moved by a set of instructions which is called the artwork's 'program'. All the work's possible outcomes are easily calculated, but each particular moment cannot be known ahead of time. Munari's own *Tetracono* is a typical example: a black plastic cube with four cones, all painted half-red, half-green; each spins at a different tempo to make a repeating pattern, which moves slowly from green to red on an eighteen minute cycle. Spin the cones and start the process, the work's function comes in focus: colour changes before your eyes – as long as you pay attention. And so it serves as a model of the way that the world changes: A sunrise is not a picture, and the sky's never simply 'blue'.

POINT 14. THE CLOCK TOWER (S)

A tall building in San Marco in the middle of the city, Torre dell'Orologio dates from the 15th century. It was built to broadcast the time to the citizens of Venice so they could share a single clock and agree on what time it is. This tower has several faces, each with a different sort of clock. At the top sit two bronze figures who strike a bell on the hour. Next, a row of four shifting tiles that turn through minutes and hours (minutes in Arabic numbers and hours in Roman numerals). Then the largest clock is a ring split into 24 units marked along its rim by letters, each of which stands for an hour. A second ring sitting inside, and moving a bit more slowly, contains signs of the Zodiac that mark out the sun's position. Each example tells the same time with a different set of symbols, fixed forms that mark passing moments in many configurations. The way time is represented influences our sense of it – time provides the algorithm, but we must produce its meaning.

POINT 13. VERSION CONTROL (D)

There's a painting called *The Last Shot*, a large abstract landscape canvas that's the final piece of work by the artist Kazys Varnelis. It's a composition in greys, and painted on top of another (not that it's so unusual for a painting to be repainted). ◘ Over lunch last year in New York, this is how the work was described by the curator to his friend – but they seemed to have their wires crossed. 'Hey, I know Kazys Varnelis! I thought he was an architect …'. Seems both of them were right (and wrong): there were two – a father and son. ◘ Neither of them realized this until quite a few hours later, so they carried on discussing this double, composite figure, half-painter and half-architect, a grey area – old and young. An intermediate person; not one Kazys or the other. ◘ It's an everyday instance of the problem of 'version control', a term from software programming that describes how changes are tracked. It records what happens to forms as they move through generations, a self-portrait of time itself – always the same, always different.

POINT 12. THE SHOT CLOCK (S)

You know the moment in the game: time is running out for your team; a player arcs the basketball from downtown as the buzzer sounds. Hold that image for a minute while we focus on the 'shot clock' – a recent invention that dates from back in the 1950s. ◘ Time used to count up as usual, then somebody crunched some numbers to make the game more exciting by adding a tighter deadline; he figured 80 points per game would best hold a crowd's attention, and working backwards deduced that 24 seconds was the key. ◘ In the new game the clock counts down from 24 back to zero. Within this small window of time the team in possession must shoot – otherwise they forfeit the ball which goes back to their opponents. Then the stopwatch counter resets, which keeps the game moving forward. ◘ So the shot clock runs a tight loop, resetting over and over, keeping things constantly urgent, in a permanent state of stress. As both metronome and timer, this clock serves a twofold function – on one hand checking duration; on the other, forcing action.

('In C' by Terry Riley, 1964, 45:32, excerpt)

In Venice to install our clocks | by plugging that chip in the desk, /
All that showed up on the scoreboards | were random abstractions of dots. /
Seems the chip had been programmed to | run on another control desk /
– Which the caretaker found downstairs | and got working right just-in-time.

Then, on our way to the party | thrown in the hall the next evening, /
A friend we met insisted that | we'd only be wasting our time … /
The party was already through … | we'd be better off going elsewhere. /
It turned out none of this was true | – too late! we'd missed our own event.

This sounds like the narrative hinge | on which time travel tends to swing, /
The adventure back to the past | to adjust a temporal loose end, /
That decisive forking moment, | the dark matter, or the portal, /
Which then shuffles the backstory | and influences the present.

Those clocks were made in advance of | any particular purpose, /
But now we had good reason to | reverse-engineer an idea: /
To somehow get to the party | that we'd accidentally missed, /
By using these altered scoreboards | as a score for incantation.

POINT 11. LEFT AND RIGHT (S)

A neuroscientist gave a talk a couple of Sundays ago on how we use spatial gestures and metaphors to relate time. Did you realize, for instance, 'On Thursday' is a metaphor? – or that when we point to the past it's invariably on our left – ? ◘ The future, on the other hand, is invariably on our right. The reason why is straightforward: we read and write from left to right – a simple enough idea that we've come to take for granted. So what's been read is left behind while what's to come is right ahead. ◘ The scientist then organized an experiment to learn more by subjecting English speakers to an hour of mirror writing, where letters go the other way (d looks like b, god becomes dog). Our brain adapts quickly to this. It's plastic matter, after all. ◘ When the direction of writing was changed to run the opposite, their feeling of past and present was reversed in just the same way. Can it really be that easy to redirect the flow of time, writing from the back to the front, ending up at the beginning – !?

POINT 10. THE MODEL AIRPLANE (D)

On a trans-Atlantic Concorde about 1978, the artist got up from his seat and threw a small model airplane made of very light balsa wood right down the center of the aisle, enabling him to say he'd launched the fastest aircraft in the world. ◘ Obviously never recorded and so potentially untrue, the airplane piece disappears when the anecdote's no longer told. In this lighter-than-air idea, the medium is the rumour. Sometimes hearsay's all it takes to propel a work into movement. ◘ That model plane in the real one exits normal time and space – a bit like being 'outside yourself', otherwise known as 'ecstatic'. This heightened state in no way means outside of the present moment, but rather totally in it – forgetting all past and future. ◘ Orgasm is the classical, most ubiquitous example; another is hysteria – better, hysterical laughter. In which case, we can consider the model airplane's line of flight as a prototype and apex of supernatural levity.

POINT 9. SUPERPOSITION (S)

The coldest place in the cosmos is in a small computer firm called D-Wave, east of Vancouver, where a chip sits in a freezer. This microchip's at the center of a new type of computer based not on binary logic but the oddball rules of quantums. ◘ One very weird aspect of which is known as 'superposition'. That's where a system can be in more than one state at the same time; moreover – and even stranger – in two different places at once (famously like Schrödinger's cat, both dead and alive in the box). ◘ Regular computers work with information contained in bits. 'Bits' stands for 'binary digit'. Each bit can be zero or one. But quantum computers work with another unit called 'qubit.' It can be one or zero, too, and also both values at once. ◘ Qubits in superposition can become what's called 'entangled', where something that happens to one also happens to the other, so information is tethered across two points in space and time. What happens in the here and now also affects a there and then.

POINT 8. POINT AND DURATION (D)

The time now is 4:38, June 11th, 2014. Look at your watch, what does it say? Certainly it can't be the same. These are specific points in time – no two can be identical. One 'now' when the words are written, and another when they're spoken. ◘ There's a certain Casio watch with a specially-doctored clock, its insides manipulated to change the display of its face. It still tells conventional time, but each number gets drawn slowly, snaking through the LCD screen from the left to the right hand side. ◘ It's designed so you can fine-tune the duration of this cycle to take from one to three seconds (in sync with your own inner clock). The watch is set correctly when it is only just legible, so the time reaches the reader at the limit of perception. ◘ In other words, you could say that this watch takes time to tell the time: a couple of seconds' focus for a single discrete moment. But time is curious that way – at once both point and duration. And time is curious that way – at once both point and duration.

('Clapping Music' by Steve Reich, 1972, 05:20)

To repeat: these clocks at each end | are identically eccentric, /
Re-programmed to behave outside | of our orthodox sense of time. /
Rather than decimal digits | (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and so on) /
Ours are based on a binary: / on or off, or big-O small-o.

The far left signal stands for eight, | the next for four, then two, then one. /
So all big-Os stand for fifteen | (that's eight plus four plus two plus one) /
And all small-os stand for zero | (that's none plus none plus none plus none) /
With all combinations between | to make sixteen units in all.

(15) O O O O, (14) O O O o | (13) O O o O, (12) O O o o /
(11) O o O O, (10) O o O o | (9) O o o O, (8) O o o o /
(7) o O O O, (6) o O O o | (5) o O o O, (4) o O o o /
(3) o o O O, (2) o o O o | (1) o o o O, (0) o o o o

By this point, are you focusing | on the structure or the meaning? /
If anything, it's more meta | the difference between the two. /
It's a bird's-eye view, a gestalt, | part and parcel, one and the same. /
And the binary past and present | can be thought in unison too.

POINT 7. PARALLEL CARDS (D)

A standard pack of playing cards with its hearts, clubs, diamonds and spades. If you look more closely you'll see that it's not that standard at all. We're dealing with parallel sets – an inner and an outer one – of cards printed both front and back; a single deck, two different games. ◘ The joker who made this twin pack said recently that the impulse grew out of fascination with the notion of a 'multiverse.' He imagined endless equal, alternative realities, where each new decision implies infinite courses of action. ◘ He used to want cards with two backs for building up houses of cards (back when he thought the numbers side was purely for decoration). But now he wants cards with two fronts to visualize this multiverse and see what new games might emerge out of this anomalous pack. ◘ A bridge that helps you apprehend two parallel actions at once – your game and its doppelgänger played in a different time and space. What if you frowned in the mirror and your reflection laughed right back, or simply walked off to leave you staring at where you used to be?

POINT 6. THE EIFFEL TOWER (S)

It's not unlike a story from more than a decade ago – David Copperfield live on stage in front of the Eiffel Tower. As the spectacle unfolded, giant curtains were hoisted up, surrounding the whole audience and blocking the Paris skyline. ◘ The magician then pressed on with his captivating performance, declaring at the finale that the Eiffel Tower had vanished. The curtains fell, and, sure enough, the monument had disappeared … then the crowd swung round to find it now towering right behind them. ◘ This illusion had been achieved by means of a moving platform rotating imperceptibly underneath the feet of the crowd. It slowly turned them back to front over the course of the evening, so by the time of the climax they were facing the other way. ◘ This story is a bit too good to check its credibility. For art's sake, it's irrelevant whether sincere or deceitful. An idea need not be viable, it just needs ample energy. An idea need not be plausible, what counts is only that it moves.

POINT 5. SUPREMATISM (D)

Sisters is a timeless painting made by Kazimir Malevich that shows two ladies on a walk, so similar they could be twins, done in the late 1920s in textbook Impressionist style, but retroactively dated 1910 – 20 years before. ◘ The fake date had everyone fooled 'til the end of the century – proof of a transition in style that never actually happened. Now that we know the actual date, the work is typically dismissed as a vain attempt to backdate consistency and completeness. ◘ But there's another way to see the chief Suprematist's gesture: those near-identical siblings aren't two different people at all, but a single woman shown twice as she moves right to left through time, a primitive time-lapse image (like a nude descending some stairs). ◘ Malevich once wrote everything is infinite and therefore null. Suprematism added up to one big eternal zero. Not 'progressive,' but out-of-time – outside normal chronology. Spanner in the cosmic counter, time's gears prevented from turning.

POINT 4. THE JESUS PRAYER (S)

Franny Glass was a New York girl lost in a spiritual crisis, who came across a modest book titled *The Way of the Pilgrim*. The pilgrim teaches disciples a chant known as 'The Jesus Prayer' – a personal invocation and channel to enlightenment. ◘ How it works is to repeat: Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on me, Jesus Christ have mercy on me, Jesus Christ have mercy on me, Jesus Christ have mercy on me, Jesus Christ have mercy on me, Jesus Christ have mercy on me, Jesus Christ have mercy on me. ◘ Said long enough you come to speak the sentence on auto-repeat. Eventually the prayer becomes coordinated with the heart. The chanter chants unconsciously, dissolving any distinction between the meter of the prayer and the rhythm of the heartbeat. ◘ To Franny's mind, the best part is you don't need to believe at all – it's a self-generating loop, a serpent eating its own tail. Between the meter of the prayer and the rhythm of the heartbeat, if repeated often enough, gradually you'll get the message.

('Fratres' by Arvo Pärt, 1977, 10:41, excerpt)

Now: the score we've been speaking here | mirrors the logic of the clocks. /
Each line has the same syllables | (up to and including this one), /
Technically called 'octameter' | – eight beats per line, each with two feet. /
And that equals sixteen pulses | … the same rhythm as our shot clocks.

Among the many types of poems | and variations of technique, /
Octameter is rarely used, | with one infamous exception: /
Edgar Allen Poe's 'The Raven' | from the early eighteen-forties /
('Once upon a midnight dreary, | while I pondered weak and weary …')

Poe later noted his reasons | for writing his lines in sixteens /
Came down to how it ebbed and flowed, | its mesmerizing quality. /
He went on to describe its form | as also 'acatalectic' /
Which means to purposefully drop | a beat from the end of a line.

No surprise that 'catalectic' | shares its root with 'catalepsy'. /
That's a 'seizure' or a 'grasping', | 'loss of contact with surroundings'. /
In other words, a state of mind | well-primed to meddle the present, /
And transport a willing body | to some former-occurred event.

POINT 3. CAUSE AND EFFECT (S)

There's this guy who traded options and so knows about the market, and its models used to predict prices, claims and contingencies (by noting all the possible scenarios that might occur and giving every likelihood a probability rating). ◘ But truly contingent events are something else altogether – beyond predictability, in a space that can't be modeled. A curveball out of nowhere, like the appearance of a black swan – not even in the wildest dreams of possible situations. ◘ The reasons for such an event can only be known in its wake; cause and effect switch places so the effect produces its cause. Consequence begs explanation; the narrative's worked out backwards. Less a theory, more a medium, its rules are written in realtime. ◘ The futures market works like this, unpredictable by nature. Traders don't know what they're doing and make it up in the moment. By getting inside the event and going along with the flow, the trick is somehow to twist time and make room for what's yet to come.

POINT 2. SPELLS (D)

The one thing feared most of all in Stevenson's *Treasure Island* is a simple graphic cipher, black ink on a paper circle – the terrible, dreaded Black Spot, a threat and a summons to death, the mere sight of which was enough to paralyze its receiver. ◘ The spot's a simple instance of the workings of a common spell – a set of precise instructions, a sequence of words or glyphs, formulated to be invoked by reading, speaking or writing. The whole thing unfolds in your mind beyond the trappings of the world. ◘ Point is, merely the suggestion of some other-worldly message is all it takes to instigate a process of transposition … to tune a mind to such a pitch that all it takes is a trigger … to loosen the grip of 'realtime' and set other modes in motion. ◘ The Fear, The Rapture – both achieved via heightened expectation, the nervous system set on edge, and a quickening of the heart. Some kind of chant (or doublespeak) meant to invoke an altered state. Some kind of chant (or doublespeak) to set off a certain pending.

POINT 1. TUNING FORKS (S)

Tuning forks produce the purest instance of a specific pitch. Hit the fork and it begins to resonate at a frequency, which depends on the exact length of the pair of parallel prongs (made of some resonant metal – for example, Sheffield blue steel) ◘ Mid-19th century Paris, a machine sits in a workshop: two tuning forks, two small mirrors, a lens, a screen, and a light source. It's all set up to visualize various types of vibrations – like the frequencies of two sounds, each tuned to a different tone. ◘ Let's see how the setup functions. The light is focused through the lens. The beam hits mirrors that are tied onto the two prongs of each fork. When you strike the forks to vibrate, two sine waves appear on the wall, combined in a single figure that looks a bit like a pretzel. ◘ Some look like loops of cosmic string, others look just like plain circles. The shape depends on which two forks are made to resonate at once. Two forks in tune with each other, the same note an octave apart, make for a 'perfect interval' and draw the sign: ∞

POINT 0. TWO INFINITIES (D)

A certain mathematician who theorized sets and limits concluded there are several distinct types of infinity. It runs counter to common sense that they could be different sizes, but consider these two main types of endless series of numbers. ◘ The first kind of infinity is the one you've known since childhood: start at zero, then count 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and the sequence goes on forever. The number we can't ever reach is known as 'infinity null'. ◘ The second version, by contrast, doesn't go upwards but deeper. Take for starters zero and 1, find the number halfway between; now repeat this process using that new number as the endpoint. Find the midpoint and its midpoint … going further and further in. ◘ You'll soon realize there's no end to this process of division. In between any two numbers lies another infinity. And stranger still, this second kind is even larger than the first. There's more space in one of these gaps than any number of numbers. [Repeat last line 16 times.]

(Dexter Sinister, 'Theme from The Last ShOt Clock', 2014, 17:00)

POSTFACE

A few last gaps still need to be plugged.

To restate the crux and climax of *The Last ShOt Clock*: there are two types of infinity. One goes up and up – *advancing*. The other goes in and in – *penetrating*. This last stanza ends on the apparently nonsensical claim that the 'deep' version of infinity is a greater infinity than the 'progressive' one.

This last verse hangs on the implication that this infinity of *depth* is the best vehicle for attending that once-missed party. The stanza ends by extending into a chant, as the last line is repeated 16 times: 'There's more space in one of these gaps | than any number of numbers /'

What *can't* be conveyed in the script (any typographic treatment only confuses the issue) is that these lines are delivered in the form of *a circular round*. This also repels description, but it's worth a shOt.

D repeats the 16 lines without pause at a steady pace, while S reads the same lines slightly offset with each respective verse – first by a quarter, then by a half, then by three-quarters, then by a full measure. (D speaks the first line, then about ¼ of the way along S starts the same line, and they continue to recite the line offset by this split-second for the first 4 lines. At the start of the 5th line S shifts to begin his lines now ½ along D's continued reading; at the start of the 9th line, he starts ¾ of the way along; and finally, at the start of the 13th line, he reads a full measure along.) This patterning means S and D read in tandem for three lines, with S speaking a last one alone.*

The circular round is a preemptive attempt to see what 'one of these gaps' sounds like – and so too, how it feels. The closing 'Theme' then aims at the same, only now using the more plastic matter of music.

So in the second and last rupture, with the clocks momentarily suspended, we explain the philosophy of this composition. It's another translation of the clock system. This time, the four positions of big and small O's each translate to a musical note: C, D, E, and F. To guarantee the purest pitch, these notes are sampled from tuning forks, then played over and over according to the pattern of the clocks. Abiding the usual binary, a big O means 'on' (the fork hit, the note sounds) and a small o means 'off' (silence). So, as the clock displays '15', or O O O O, all the notes are played, C, D, E, F, and left to resonate over each other. Considerably amplified, the pitches collide and generate a miscellany of sine waves. The waves can be felt as well as heard.

Counting backwards (as usual), as the clock displays '14' or O O O o, all notes but the last are played: C, D, E, -, and left to resonate again. However, as tuning forks produce a long sustain, these new notes also resonate over the previous round's – the '14's over the '15's – and yield even stranger vibrations. And so the theme continues according to this pattern, down through '1' (o o o O), which means only the last note is played (-, -, -, F), and finally '0' (o o o o), meaning a round of silence (-, -, -, -).

And then over again: the whole sequence of 16 cycles 16 times, and this somehow lasts 17 minutes. During which, the sound waves collide in increasingly erratic ways, and the collective ear starts to focus not on the notes themselves, but on what occurs between the notes.

At which point the whole thing appears to end.

– DS, December 2014

This reversible English/Lithuanian booklet is published on the occasion of Dexter Sinister's *Work-in-PrOgress / The Last StOp Clock*, CAC Vilnius, 2014. The cover and following page originally formed the opposite sides of an A5 card that served as a dual caption list / invitation card to the exhibition/event.

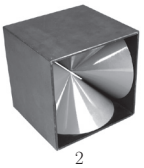
The Last ShOt Clock was team-translated from English into Lithuanian by Renata Dubinskaitė, Virginija Januškevičiūtė, Eglė Kulbokaitė and Asta Vaičiulytė, all of whom were among the audience during the incantation's first delivery as well as being its first readers. Although the parts written in verse have been translated as close to the original English meter as possible, and every attempt made to maintain the flow of the sentences in the parts written in paragraphs, both meter and meaning will inevitably have suffered.

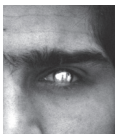
With further thanks to Aurimė Aleksandravičiūtė, Francesca Bertolotti, Liudvikas Buklys, Virginija Januškevičiūtė, Raimundas Malašauskas, Rūtenė Merkliopaitė, Robertas Narkus, and Jonas Zakaitis.

* There's always something that doesn't quite compute; always another gap.

SOLSTICE

OPENING of Work-in-PrOgress, an exhibition of work concerned with exiting regular modes of time arranged by Dexter Sinister

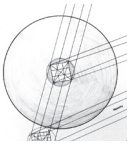





1 2 3 4

1. Kazimir Malevich, *Sisters*, 1910, oil on canvas. With thanks to Rūtenė Merkliopaitė and Perrine Bailleux.
2. Bruno Munari, *Tetracono*, 1965, multiple. Each cone spins at a different speed, collectively transforming from green to red over 18 minutes. Private collection.
3. Alighiero e Boetti, *Contatore*, 1967, multiple, edition of 123. Private collection.
4. Giuseppe Penone, *Progetto per Rovesciare i propri occhi (To reverse one's eyes)*, 1970. Documentation of the action by the artist. (Note: this work was removed from the exhibition at the request of Archivio Penone.)






5 6 7 8

5. Clock system diagram, Jespersen, J., and Fitz-Randolf, J., *From Sundials to Atomic Clocks*, 1977, silkscreen on wall.
6. Muriel Cooper, *Self-portrait with Polaroid SX-70*, c.1982, video imaged and printed at the Visible Language Workshop, MIT. Courtesy of Mass. College of Art & Design.
7. Stephen Willats, *The World As It Is And The World As It Could Be*, 2006, print on aluminium. Courtesy the artist and Victoria Miro, London.
8. Kazys Varnelis, *The Last Shot*, 2007–2008, oil on canvas. Courtesy of National Museum of Lithuania.



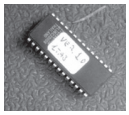
9 10 11 12

9. Photograph from the reverse of the instructions inside Ryan Gander's multiple, *Parallel Cards*, 2009 (a standard set of playing cards printed on both sides).
10. Dexter Sinister, *Naive Set Theory*, 2009, proof print.
11. Dexter Sinister, *Watch Scan 1200 dpi*, 2010, postcard.
12. Dexter Sinister after Albrecht Dürer, *Death and the Landsknecht*, 1510, as reproduced on back cover of *Bulletins of The Serving Library* No. 1 (2011).




13 14 15 16

13. Dexter Sinister, *MTDBT2F glyph*, 2011, composite Risograph print of letters from the typeface Meta-The-Difference-Between-The-Two-Font.
14. Raimundas Malašauskas, *Photo Finish*, 2011, hologram.
15. Dexter Sinister and Erik Wysocan, Watch Wyoscan 0.5 Hz, 2013, reverse-engineered Casio digital watch by Halmos.
16. Dexter Sinister, advertisement for Watch Wyoscan 0.5 Hz, 2013, digital print. Photograph by Jason Fulford.




17 18 19

17. Microchip used to re-program scoreboards at Palasport, Venice, Dexter Sinister's contribution to 'oO/Oo', the Cypriot-Lithuanian pavilion at the 2013 Venice Biennial.
18. Dexter Sinister, *Work-in-Progress,* 2013. Installation shot at Palasport, Venice, by Robertas Narkus.
19. Dexter Sinister, *Poster for an Infinite Solstice Event*, 2013, 35 mm slide, light.
20. True Mirror, made by True Mirror Co., 2014.




21 22 23 24

21. Dexter Sinister, poster for *Letter & Spirit*, 2014, silkscreen print.
22. Dexter Sinister, *Letter & Spirit*, 2014, a program that runs a script, 16'06".
23. Angie Keefer, *Fountain*, 2014. Commodity futures indexes, video, transparent holographic screen, motion aftereffect. When markets rise, water falls forward; when markets sink, the fall reverses.
24. Dexter Sinister, *Work-in-Progress*, 2014, a pair of LED clocks programmed to tell the time identical to scoreboards adjusted at Palasport, Venice, one year ago.

20.6

until 17.8.2014

3. The Last ShOt Clock

Kern dieses Projekts war ein Mikrochip, der dazu programmiert wurde, ein Work-in-Progress umzunutzen. Dabei handelte es sich um zwei Anzeigetafeln am jeweiligen Ende eines Basketball-Feldes im Palasport in Venedig – der Beitrag von Dexter Sinister für den gemeinsamen Pavillon von Litauen und Zypern für die Biennale von Venedig 2013. Die Chips programmierten die für die digitale LED-Zeitangabe verantwortliche Schnittstelle so um, dass sich die Uhranzeige in eine unorthodoxe geloopte Konfiguration aus kleinen und großen „O's" verwandelte. Darin steckte der Bezug zum reversiblen Titel des Pavillons – Oo oder oO.

Die Uhr basiert auf einem Hexadezimal-Zeitcode (16 Einheiten), der über einen binären Schnittstellen-Code (zwei Einheiten) läuft. Die Uhr enthält vier Ziffern, die von rechts nach links für 8, 4, 2 und 1 stehen. Jede von ihnen kann an (ein großes O) oder aus (ein kleines o) sein. Also zum Beispiel: OOOO = 8+4+2+1 = 15; oOoO = 0+4+0+1 = 5; oooO = 0+0+0+1 = 1 und so weiter.

Ein Jahr später wurden dieselben beiden Uhren für eine stärker konzertierte Arbeit verwendet. Zwei LED-Repliken wurden an jeweils ein Ende eines im Freien gelegenen Atriums im Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius gehängt. Dort waren sie Bestandteil einer größeren Ausstellung, die 2014 von Dexter Sinister organisiert wurde. Die Schau vereinte mehrere Arbeiten von Dexter Sinister und anderen Künstlern und beschäftigte sich mit dem Thema der unorthodoxen Zeit. Die Uhren waren der Parallax-Fokus eines namensgebenden Talks für zwei Personen, der beschwörerische Züge trug und verschiedene Wege und Mittel zum Thema Zeit aus unterschiedlichen Disziplinen verknüpfte. Die Beschwörungszeremonie ist für zwei Sprecher geschrieben (D und S), die in einer poetischen Metrik Anekdoten rezitieren, die den Mustern der Uhren entsprechen. Dazu gesellt sich eine Erzählung, die den Hintergrund aus Venedig beleuchtet. Die Performance wird durch einige zugehörige Musikstücke akzentuiert, darunter ein Schlussthema, das für vier Stimmgabeln orchestriert wurde, die ebenfalls auf dem exzentrischen System der Uhren basieren.

Wie der Talk belegte, bestand die Idee darin, ein gemeinsames Verständnis von *Zeitreise* herbeizuzitieren, um eine Party zu besuchen, die versehentlich während der Eröffnung der Biennale in Venedig im Vorjahr verpasst worden war. Um den Einsatz nochmals zu erhöhen, sollte The Last ShOt Clock seinen Höhepunkt zur Sommersonnenwende (am 21. Juni 2014) erreichen.

Es folgt eine Beschwörungszeremonie, die live am CAC Vilnius gelesen und zusammen mit einem Cover und einer Liste mit Arbeiten in der zugehörigen Ausstellung (anfangs die beiden Seiten der Einladungskarte) sowie einer erläuternden Einleitung und einem Schlusswort reproduziert wurde. Wie der Text beschreibt, entspricht das Layout des Skripts der poetischen Metrik der Beschwörungszeremonie (Oktameter). Es wurde ein halbes Jahr nach der Ausstellung vom CAC als Booklet im DIN-A5-Format mit 32 Seiten und einer litauischen Übersetzung publiziert.

3. The Last ShOt Clock

The seed of this project was a microchip programmed to repurpose Work-in-Progress, a pair of scoreboards at either end of a basketball court at Palasport, Venice, which was Dexter Sinister's contribution to the joint Lithuania/Cyprus pavilion at the 2013 Venice Biennial. The chips re-engineered the scoreboards' digital LED time interface to display an unorthodox clock based on a looping configuration of upper- and lower-case 'O's and 'o's, in reference to the pavilion's reversible title, Oo or oO.

The clock runs a hexadecimal-based (16 units) time via a binary-based (2 units) interface. The clock comprises four digits, that from right to left represent 8, 4, 2, and 1, each of which can be on (a large O) or off (a small o). For example: OOOO = 8+4+2+1 = 15; oOoO = 0+4+0+1 = 5; oooO = 0+0+0+1 = 1, and so on.

A year later, the same twin clocks were put to more concerted work. Two dedicated LED replicas were hung at either end of an outdoor atrium at the Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius as part of a larger exhibition organized by Dexter Sinister in 2014. This show comprised a number of works by Dexter Sinister and others based on the same theme of unorthodox time. The clocks were the parallax focus of an eponymous, two-sided incantatory talk that assembles various ways and means of exiting regular modes of time drawn from different disciplines. The incantation is written for two speakers (D and S), who recite anecdotes in a poetic meter that matches the clocks' pattern, along with a parallel narrative that recounts their Venice backstory. The performance is punctuated by a few pieces of related music, including a closing theme scored for four tuning forks also based on the clocks' eccentric system.

As is related in the talk, the idea was to summon a collective sense of *time travel* in order to attend a party inadvertently missed back in Venice on the Biennial's opening night one year before. In order to up the ante, The Last ShOt Clock was timed to climax at midnight on the cusp of summer solstice (June 21, 2014).

The previous pages carry is the incantation that was read live at CAC Vilnius, reproduced along with a cover page and list of works in the accompanying exhibition (initially two sides of an invitation card), plus an explanatory pre- and post-face. As the text explains, the script is typeset according to the incantation's poetic meter (octameter). It was published by CAC as a 32-page A5 booklet along with a Lithuanian translation some six months after the show.

```
** initialization complete. **\r
Welcome to Meta-the-Difference-Between-the-Two-Font.
Today is Fri Mar  2 15:27:30 EST 2012
*
Current working directory is /Users/reinfurt/Documents/Projects/META THE DIFFERE
NCE BETWEEN THE 2 FONT/Source/Meta-the-difference between-the-two-Font/v0.6c

              SLANT   | SUPERNESS
                  \    |
                   \   |
                    \  |
                     \ |
                      \|_____________ WEIGHT

                        PEN ===>

WEIGHT=50.00000000000000000000
SLANT=.20000000000000000000
SUPER=.57500000000000000000
PENTYPE=0
PENX=349.50000000000000000000
PENY=100
PENR=216.00000000000000000000
Welcome to Meta-the-Difference-Between-the-Two-Font.
Today is Fri Mar  2 15:27:30 EST 2012
*
Current working directory is /Users/reinfurt/Documents/Projects/META THE DIFFERE
NCE BETWEEN THE 2 FONT/Source/Meta-the-difference between-the-two-Font/v0.6c
mftrace 1.2.16
Font `mtdbt2f4d'...
Using encoding file: `/usr/local/texlive/2011basic/texmf/fonts/enc/dvips/tetex/m
tdbt2f.enc'
Running Metafont...
Tracing bitmaps... [0][1][2][3][4][5][6][7][8][9][10][11][12][13][14][15][16][17
][18][19][20][21][22][23][24][25][26][27][28][29][30][31][32][33][34][35][36][37
][38][39][40][41][42][43][44][45][46][47][48][49][50][51][52][53][54][55][56][57
][58][59][60][61][62][63][64][65][66][67][68][69][70][71][72][73][74][75][76][77
][78][79][80][81][82][83][84][85][86][87][88][89][90][91][92][93][94][95][96][97
][98][99][100][101][102][103][104][105][106][107][108][109][110][111][112][113][
114][115][116][117][118][119][120][121][122][123][124][125][126][127][129][130][
131][132][134][135][136][137][138][140][141][142][143]
Assembling raw font to `mtdbt2f4d.pfa.raw'...
Copyright (c) 2000-2011 by George Williams.
 Executable based on sources from 13:48 GMT 22-Feb-2011-D.
 Library based on sources from 13:48 GMT 22-Feb-2011.
** metafont ok **
** fontforge ok **
** mtdbt2f ok **
Bye.
** mtdbt2f-make ok **
Bye.
** sleep for 0 seconds **
```

This bulletin flows directly from "A Note on the Type" by Dexter Sinister, first published in *The Curse of Bigness*, Queens Museum of Art (2010), then as wall vinyl that comprised an exhibition called "The Plastic Arts," Gallery 400 at University of Illinois, Chicago (2010), subsequently as a text in *Dot Dot Dot 20* (2010), in vinyl for the exhibition "A Note on the Signs" at Artissima, Torino, Italy (2010), and the exhibition "A Note on the T" at Graphic Design Worlds, Milan, Italy (2011), as a text in *Bulletins of the Serving Library #1*, *Afterall* (2011), and in the forthcoming *Graphic Design (History in the Making)*, Occasional Papers (2012).

The full caption for the image on p.158 is: Herbert Bayer, *Research in the development of Universal Type*, 1925. Black ink on paper, 11 3/4 x 23 5/8" (29.8 x 60 cm). Harvard Art Museums/Busch-Reisinger Museum, Gift of the artist. Photo: Imaging Department © President and Fellows of Harvard College.

Cover image: from The Hollows

In the early 1980s, on the pages of academic design journal *Visible Language*, a classic thesis-antithesis-synthesis played out around the technological and philosophical fine points of computer-assisted type design. Stanford professor Donald Knuth begins with his article, "The Concept of a Meta-font" (Winter 1981). Two years prior, Knuth had conceived and programmed MetaFont—a software that enabled users to generate unlimited numbers of fonts by controlling a limited set of parameters. The article is a performative account of his intervening attempts, using MetaFont to harness the essential "intelligence" of letterforms. In Knuth's view, the way a single letter is drawn—an *a priori* A, say—presupposes and informs all other letters in the same font. This information can be isolated, turned into a set of instructions, and put to work computer-automating the generation of new characters by filling in the features between two or more variables such as weight or slant.

Such intelligence is (and has always been) implicit in any typeface, but Knuth is out to omit all ambiguity and install a more definite system. He acknowledges that this preoccupation with designing meta-level instructions rather than the fonts themselves is typical of the contemporary inclination to view things "from the outside, at a more abstract level, with what we feel is a more mature understanding." From this elevated vantage, MetaFont was set up to oversee "how the letters would change in different circumstances."

A year later, fellow mathematician Douglas Hofstadter responded with his "MetaFont, Metamathematics, and Metaphysics" (Autumn 1982). While "charmed" by Knuth's thesis, and admitting the bias of his own interests in artificial intelligence and aesthetic theory, Hofstadter proceeds to shoot down his colleague's apparent claim that the shape of any given letterform is "mathematically containable." To support his case, he invokes mathematician Kurt Gödel's Incompleteness Theorems, which assert that any account of a logically coherent system always contains one root-level instance that cannot itself be contained by that account. Hofstadter's antithesis then usefully couches the debate in terms of "the letter of the law" versus "the spirit of the law," a familiar antinomy that posits an absolute deference to a set of set rules against a consistent-yet-fluid set of principles. Our prevailing legal system is, of course, based on both: judges base their decisions on firmly established precedent, but also map

uncharted territory by bringing the full range of their experience to bear on specific cases "in a remarkably fluid way." In this manner, the law itself adapts.

Hofstadter argues that an accordingly *spirited* conception of type design would therefore renounce Knuth's ur-A-FORM in favor of a yet-higher-level abstraction, an ur-A-ESSENCE; the fundamental difference being that Hofstadter's notion of "intelligence" extends beyond a Platonic shape, allowing for the concept of *what constitutes an A* to change, too—beyond what we can reasonably conceive of this possibly being in the future. Each new instance of an A adds to our general understanding of this idea (and ideal), which is necessarily assembled backwards over time.

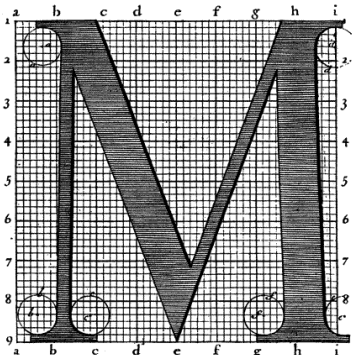
Hofstadter includes this illustration of two letters vying for the same "typographic niche," to make himself clear:

Neatly enough, the following year a linguistics professor called Geoffrey Sampson drafted a brief response to Hofstadter's response to Knuth, titled "Is Roman Type an Open-Ended Question?" (Autumn 1983), which, it turns out, is decidedly rhetorical. Sampson argues that Hofstadter's hairsplitting unfairly and unnecessarily exaggerates Knuth's claims to the point of warping both his meaning and intentions. There is enough metaphysical latitude, the linguist referees, to accommodate both points of view without recourse to the misery of analytical one-upmanship. Sampson's synthesis of letter and spirit contends that it is perfectly reasonable to conceive of letterforms as both a closed system (Knuth's A-shape) AND as an open-ended system (Hofstadter's A-ness).

Relatively speaking, it depends *what you're after.*

. . .

The history of typography is marked by a persistent drive to rationalize. Following the invention of movable type in the mid-15th century, the Renaissance saw several attempts to prescribe the construction of the Roman alphabet: Fra Luca Pacioli's alphabet of perfect relations, Albrecht Dürer's letters of mathematical instructions, and Geoffroy Tory's humanistic rationalizations. These attempts were, however, essentially calligraphic exercises in determining "divine proportions;" the first to apply Enlightenment rationality to properly technical ends was the so-called Romain du Roi, or the "King's Roman." Commissioned by Louis XIV in Paris at the end of the 17th century, it was a typical Age of Reason project—the imposition of a mathematically-rigorous structure on forms that had, until now, developed organically, initially shaped by the human hand (calligraphy, inscriptions, woodcuts) and adapted according to the various demands and opportunities of the printing press and its attendant technologies. Designed by "a royal committee of philosophers and technologists" from the Academy of Sciences, the Romain du Roi was initially plotted on an orthogonal 48 x 48 grid, and a corollary "sloped Roman" italic variant derived by skewing the upright version.



The coordinates were first engraved as a set of instructions, then cut into punches to make metal type, which were to be used exclusively on official or state-approved materials. In this way, the King's letters exerted state power like a great seal or particular signature.

Such ratiocination was revived at the Bauhaus in the 1920s, in line with two of the school's foundational principles set up to meet the demands of industrialization: the omission of ornament and the reduction to geometric elements. The most celebrated outcome was Herbert Bayer's 1925 Universal Alphabet, a pared-down sans-serif comprised exclusively of lower-case characters. Bayer adapted the basic glyphs for typewriter and handwriting, experimented with phonetic alternatives, and proposed a wide family of variants, such as the condensed bold version drawn on this panel:

Alongside the basic character set (minus a presumably redundant o, but with alternatives to a and g, as well as two d's that anticipate lighter weights), Bayer has further abstracted the tools he used to draw it: ruler, T-square, set square, compass and protractor. As such, the drawing captions itself, pointing to its point—that this is a project *intrinsically concerned with a particular mode of construction.* Around the same time, fellow Bauhausler Josef Albers followed similar principles to slightly different ends with his Stencil Alphabet. This, too, was a single-case font, now entirely configured from ten rudimentary shapes, also typically isolated and presented alongside the assembled letters. Drawn and photographed for exclusive use in the school's own publications and publicity, these elemental Bauhaus fonts remained closeted explorations rather than properly industrial products. Neither was properly developed into a "working" typeface, mass-manufactured in metal for wider use. Outside the school, though, prominent *Werkbunder* Paul Renner toned down the hard geometry with gentler, "humanist" sensibilities—more modulation, less harsh on the eye—to yield

his commercially successful Futura. When it was issued in 1927, godfather of the nascent "New Typography," Jan Tschichold, wrote that

it cannot be open to one person to create the letterform of our age, which is something that must be free of personal traces. It will be the work of several people, among whom one will probably find an engineer.

During the 1930s, British type designer Stanley Morison was in charge of Monotype, the most significant type foundry of the day. Morison was solicited by *The Times.*, London's principal newspaper, to take out a £1,000 full-page ad. Morison responded yes, as long he could typeset the page himself, because the newspaper's existing design was in such a dire state. This conversation reportedly carried itself up the *Times*' chain of command, prompting its director to invite Morison to oversee a complete overhaul of the paper's typography. Morison accepted, again on one condition—that the paper abolish the use of full points after isolated proper nouns, which he (rightly) considered superfluous and a prime example of the sort of typographic depravity he intended to stamp out. The paper removed the offending punctuation, and Morison climbed aboard.

Newspaper typography is a particularly sensitive art. Minute adjustments have critical knock-on effects for the amount of news that can be issued —especially when multiplied by the massive circulation figures of *The Times*. In a 25-page memorandum, Morison concluded that the house typeface needed to be updated. What became Times New Roman, however, was neither redrawn from scratch nor merely an amendment of the existing version, but rather *amalgamated* from a number of different typefaces made at various points over the previous 400 years. The mongrel result was effectively collaged from past forms, so the lowercase e doesn't exactly "match" the lowercase a—at least not according to the usual standards of typographic consistency. Up close, Times New Roman is full of such quirks.


THE TIMES

No. 46,254 LATE LONDON EDITION LONDON MONDAY OCTOBER 3 1932 PRICE 2d

DEATHS (continued) PERSONAL PERSONAL PERSONAL BUSINESS OFFERS CLUB ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHEPSTOW RACE CLUB.

The design of letterforms usually manifests an individual designer's aesthetic impulse at a given point in time, but Times New Roman was the bastard offspring of MANY designers working ACROSS time, with Morison's role something like that of producer, editor, or arranger. The most frequently repeated account of the type's development suggests that Morison gave an existing type sample and some rough sketches to an assistant in the paper's advertising department, who duly cobbled together the new font. Whatever the story, in a note on HIS type, Morison concluded, auspiciously enough: "Ordinary readers, for whom a type is what it does, will be pleased to leave them to analyze the spirit of the letter."

French type designer Adrian Frutiger took the rational mapping of the Romain du Roi to another plateau with Univers, released by the foundry Deberny & Peignot in 1957. In line with the all-encompassing aspirations of mid-20th century Swiss design—locus of the so-called International Style—Univers was conceived as an unusually extended family of fonts. The standard palette of variants, traditionally limited to regular, italic, bold, and sometimes bold italic, was expanded sevenfold, yielding a total of 21 fonts to be cut at any given size. In the foundry's publicity, the family was usually housed in a two-dimensional matrix: an X-axis charts relative WIDTH interspersed with POSITION (Frutiger's term for slant), while the Y-axis charts relative WEIGHT. The family DNA is manifest in a few eccentricities, such as a square dot over the i and a double-barred lower-case a, while individual character sets are named according to their position in the matrix—55 for standard roman, 56 for standard oblique, 65 for medium roman, 66 for medium oblique, and so on.

Univers' matrix implies that the family could potentially procreate in any direction *ad infinitum*, and, in fact, the project has remained notably open since its inception. Frutiger himself reworked the typeface for digital release by Linotype in 1997, raising the total number of distinct character sets from the original 21 to 63. These included additions to both ends of the chart (Ultra Light and Extended Heavy), along with new monospace variants, requiring a third number to be added to the identifying code. In the wake of Univers' popularity, further dimensions have since been introduced, including extended character sets such as Central European, and non-Latin alphabets such as Greek, Cyrillic, Arabic, and Japanese. This globalization culminated in 2011 with Linotype rechristening the entire design "Univers Next."

. . .

Towards the end of "The Concept of a Meta-font," an admirably frank Knuth wonders: "The idea of a meta-font should now be clear. But what good is it?"

Hofstadter, for one, had an idea: "Never has an author had anything remotely like this power to control the final appearance of his or her work." Indeed, seeing his own writing in print years earlier, Knuth had been so upset by the shoddy standards of early digital typesetting that he resolved to do it himself—not unlike Morison with his *Times* ad. It took longer than expected, but a decade later, Knuth had designed TeX, an automated typesetting system still in wide use today within academic publishing. MetaFont was initally developed as handmaiden to TeX, to generate the fonts to be used within the broader tasks of document markup and page assembly. However, as MetaFont developed as a project in its own right, its purpose was less immediately apparent. At the time of his *Visible Language* article at least, MetaFont appears to be more a case of hobbyist tinkering in search of an eventual application.

To be fair, Knuth does propose a few uses, all of which were already possible but certainly enhanced by the speed of computer processing. One is the ability to adjust the details of a particular font in line with the limits of a given output device—to make letters thinner or less intricate, for instance, so as to resist type "filling in" with either ink (on paper) or pixels

(on low-resolution monitors). A second is the possibility of generating countless iterations of the same basic design with slight differences in order to compare and contrast. But a more surprising (and most emphatically-stated) third function of MetaFont, according to its creator, is to meet the "real need" of "mankind's need for variety." In other words, to create difference for the sake of difference.

And so the notion of developing MetaFont as an autonomous project rather than as one of TeX's machine-parts appears to aim foremost at expanding the possibilities of literary expression—anticipating "greater freedom," a "typeface of one's own," "multiple fonts to articulate multiple voices," and so on. It's worth recalling, though, that when Knuth invented TeX in order to better typeset his own pages, or Morison refurbished *The Times*, their impetus was fundamentally reactive, not constructive. They weren't out to expand the possibilities for expression *per se*, only to reinstate standards that had been eroded—ones that had been established in the first place to articulate written language as clearly as possible, not to pile on the effects. As Knuth himself states, typefaces are more medium than message, to the extent that "A font should be sublime in its appearance but subliminal in its effect." What he didn't foresee (or at least worry over) is that mankind's real need for variety would tend towards the wholesale takeoever of novelty as an end in itself.

. . .

In his 1928 book *One-Way Street*, the German cultural critic Walter Benjamin had already anticipated Knuth's "power to control the final appearance of his or her work," alluding to the artistic ends that an increased intimacy between writer and technology might foster. Specifically, he predicted that the writer will start to compose his work with a typewriter instead of a pen when "the precision of typographic forms has entered directly into the conception of his books," to the degree that "new systems with more variable typefaces might then be needed."

By writing directly into a mechanical form rather than a manuscript (as we're doing right now) the writer would be working closer to the nature of the multiplied result, and through an increasing awareness and gradual mastery of the form's new limitations and possibilities *the writing itself

would evolve;* the shorter the distance between the raw material of words and their processed output, the more entwined the content and form from the outset. This line of thinking was more famously expounded by Benjamin in his 1936 essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," which more broadly argues that an authentic, pertinent art is the result of engagement with the latest technological innovations.

Benjamin was an active Marxist, committed to the notion that the technologies of manufacture—the "means of production"—ought to be owned by the people who operate them. In 1934's "The Author as Producer," instead of focusing on factories and workers, he attempts to pinpoint the nature of a *socially committed art.* Writing and the other arts, he writes, are grounded in social structures such as educational institutions and publishing networks, but rather than merely asking how an artist's work stands in relation TO these structures, he queries how it stands IN them. He demands that artists refrain from merely adopting political "content," propagating an ideological cause, and work instead to transform the root-level MEANS by which their work is produced and distributed. This "progressive" artistic approach INEVITABLY manifests a "correct" political tendency. The work practices in lieu of preaching.

Benjamin's first case study in "The Author as Producer" is the Soviet writer Sergei Tretiakov, who lived and worked on an agricultural commune for extended periods before writing his experiences up into a novel. He is offered as an exemplary "operative writer," implicating himself in the matter at hand, as opposed to the common hack who merely observes and "gives information." Benjamin's Exhibit A, though, is his immediate contemporary Bertolt Brecht, who subverted orthodox drama by way of his epic theatre's celebrated "distancing effects"—leaving the lights on, renouncing expository narrative, presenting a series of objective "situations" in order that the spectators draw their own conclusions. Via these and other manipulations of "technique," Brecht transformed "the functional relation between the stage and the public, text and production, director and actor."

Necessarily leading by his own and others' example, then, Benjamin urges the artist to perpetually reconsider his role away from prevailing norms, job descriptions, professional standards, and outside expectations

generally. What MIGHT the work of a constructively-minded "writer" constitute? Are the abilities to distill an opinion and turn a phrase adequately deployed via the regular mediums—newspaper columns, books, journals and pamphlets—or might they be more usefully channeled through writing, say, captions to photographs, or scripts to make films; or indeed by renouncing writing altogether and taking up photography instead? Hence the essay's title is also its proposition: the writer (or artist) should be less a hemmed-in author than a free-ranging producer, closing the divide between her "intellectual" and "productive" activities.

. . .

In "A Note on the Type" (2010) we previously offered a history and extension of Knuth's MetaFont project. Our appreciative "note" (more a love-letter written 30 years late) was then typeset in our own updated version of MetaFont—basically Knuth's project rebooted for the PostScript generation and, following a throwaway remark by the late David Foster Wallace, rechristened Meta-The-Difference-Between-The-Two-Font. That "single" note has since been published in multiple contexts and formats—on screens, pages, and walls. While all conform to the same basic essay template, each new instance adds three bits of writing by other people, each typeset in unique, freshly-generated MTDBT2-fonts to demonstrate the software's essential plasticity. These extra texts have alluded to various facets of the project—*repetition,* *habit,* or *the gray area between art and design,* for example—that have suggested themselves as it has rolled palimpsestuously along.

Meta-The-Difference-Between-The-Two-Font picked up where Knuth's MetaFont left off. In fact, the only OSTENSIBLE difference between the two is that the new version was re-scripted in contemporary code to run on current computers. When typefaces are reduced to on/off bits of information, the typographic norms established by metal type (and carried over into photocomposition) are no longer bound to material necessity—they can be ignored and modified, and this is precisely what Knuth did. However, it was only with the advent and proliferation of PostScript in the early 1980s that typefaces became "device independent," freed from their association with particular composing machines and their controlling companies. But beyond this nominal "language difference," MTDBT2F

remained more or less faithful to MetaFont's founding principles—not least its wacko parameters borrowed from Knuth's Computer Modern font, which include "SUPERNESS," "CURLINESS," and so on.

The ACTUAL difference between the two, on the other hand, is less easy to discern. One clue is the simple difference in time: what it meant to make it *then,* and what it means to make it *now.*

In his essay "On the New" (2002), Russian art theorist Boris Groys wrote:

Being new is, in fact, often understood as a combination of being different and being recently-produced. We call a car a NEW car if this car is different from other cars, and at the same time the latest, most recent model produced ... But as Kierkegaard pointed out, to be new is by no means the same as being different ... the new is a DIFFERENCE WITHOUT DIFFERENCE, or a difference which we are unable to recognize because it is not related to any pre-given structural code.

He continues:

For Kierkegaard, therefore, the only medium for a possible emergence of the new is the ordinary, the "non-different," the identical—not the OTHER, but the SAME.

MTDBT2F is, more-or-less, the same as MetaFont, abiding the obvious fact that it swallows its predecessor. Although the result may look the same, it clearly can't be, because in addition to the "productive" software, the new version embeds its "intellectual" backstory—a story which is not merely supplementary but absolutely essential. MTDBT2F is a tool to generate countless PostScript fonts, sure, but it is *at least equally* a tool to think around and about MetaFont.

This broader notion is already ingrained in that original *Visible Language* debate, again most keenly foreseen by Hofstadter, who wrote that one of the best things MetaFont might do is inspire readers to chase after the intelligence of an alphabet, and "yield new insights into the elusive 'spirits' that flit about so tantalizingly, hidden just behind those lovely shapes we call 'letters.'" Hofstadter is still referencing fonts and computers here, but

his sentiments can easily be read under what art critic Dieter Roelstraete recently called "the taunting of thought." In fact, Walter Benjamin closed "The Author as Producer" with the following summary:

You may have noticed that the chain of thought whose conclusion we are approaching only presents the writer with a single demand, the demand of REFLECTING, **of thinking about his position in the process of production.**

At least as much as MTDBT2F serves as a functioning typeface, or set of typefaces, then, it is also a red herring, a carrot, and a mirror. It is a nominal setup for a nominal subject to play out, typically moving in and out of focus, veering off into other fields, and trespassing on other topics. In this unruly manner, the font serves us (or anyone else) exactly as it serves language—as rubber cement, a bonding agent.

. . .

In "The Designer as Producer," a quick riff on "The Author as Producer" from 2004, design critic Ellen Lupton writes that Benjamin "celebrated the proletarian ring of the word 'production,' and the word carries those connotations into the current period," offering us "a new crack at materialism, a chance to reengage the physical aspects of our work." To claim, or reclaim, the "tools of production" in the arts today, though, shouldn't imply some form of engagement, or worse, REengagement, with heavy machinery, hand tools, hard materials, or the studio (art-equivalent of the factory floor). More plausibly, it implies digital code.

Code resides in The Hollows, the curiously-named engine room of immaterial media, domain of scripts and programs, that has been likened by design group Metahaven to the stock market crash: "surface without surface, the exposure of the naked infrastructure or root level system language which precedes surface itself, surface without its effects."

Another recent essay titled after Benjamin and written by Boris Groys, "Religion in the Age of Digital Reproduction," invokes the protagonists of *The Matrix* as being uniquely equipped to perceive the workings of The Hollows. While Neo and co. were able to read image files as code, the average spectator "does not have the magic pill … that would allow him

or her to enter the invisible digital space otherwise concealed behind the digital image." And auspiciously enough, Groys also draws on our by-now-familiar terms, letter and spirit.

In updating Benjamin's title, Groys signals the same basic investigation —of an existing phenomenon (this time religion rather than art) in a new milieu (digital rather than mechanical). Religious practice, he writes, has always involved the reproduction of institutionalized forms, but as Western religion has become increasingly personal and privatized, an unconditional "freedom of faith" has developed alongside traditional, conditional forms. Contemporary fundamentalist religion remains, by definition, grounded in the devout repetition of a fixed "letter" rather than a free "spirit" —material and external rather than essential and implied. This antinomy of "dead letter vs. living spirit" (which tallies easily enough with the legal one related by Hofstadter) informs all Western discourse on religion. On one hand, the typically "spirited" anti-fundamentalist account favors a living, powerful tradition capable of adapting its central message to different times and places, thus maintaining its vitality and relevance. Conversely, the ritualized repetition of the fundamentalist "letter" amounts to a kind of revolutionary stasis or violent rupture in the ever-changing order of things. Religious fundamentalism can thus be conceived as religion *after the death of the spirit:* letter and spirit are separated and polarized to the extent that the former no longer guarantees the latter. "A material difference is now JUST a difference," Groys writes, "—there is no essence, no being, and no meaning underlying such a formal difference at a deeper level."

While earlier media suited and so precipitated the circulation of conditional religion (1:1 mechanically-reproduced texts and images disseminated via orthodox channels), contemporary web-based media more closely approximate and so facilitate the unconditional—the wild dissemination of idiosyncratic views. And as digital reproduction supplants mechanical reproduction, the video image becomes the medium of choice. The cheap, anonymous, promiscuous character of digital information guarantees reproduction and dissemination more than any other historical medium. But what's REALLY being duplicated is, of course, the image's code —its invisible DNA.

In the 1930s, Benjamin had reasonably assumed that future technologies would only continue to guarantee the resemblance between an original and its copy, but now the opposite is true: each manifestation of the original is actually *different,* because typically overridden and recalibrated according to each spectator's local preferences (resolution, color calibration, style sheets, etc.) while ONLY THE CODE REMAINS THE SAME. In Groys' final analysis, spirit and letter are transposed from a metaphysical to a technological plane, where "spirit" is script, and each new visualization of that script is a corresponding "letter." (Picture m4v's, jpeg's and mp3's as angels "transmitting their divine command.") By now the terms are confused to the point of inversion: the so-called "spirit" of digital code is fixed, while the so-called "letter" of its various manifestations is fluid. Consequently, forms—surfaces—are no longer tethered to definite meaning, no longer plausible, and so no longer to be trusted.

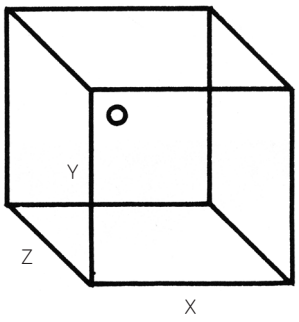
This is old news. However, as digital media become increasingly ubiquitous, templates increasingly homogenous and entrenched, the most likely place a "writer" might usefully "produce" today is in The Hollows. Hidden or invisible, and otherwise inaccessible to most, this is where we might conceivably reconnect spirit and letter, essence and identity —for "Ordinary readers, for whom a type is what it does."

. . .

How to keep things moving?

MetaFont and MTDBT2F were both set up to generate an infinite number of individual typefaces by tweaking a few simple parameters at different points in time. But what if we make one of those parameters *time itself*?

First let's transpose the extant ones onto a 3-D graph, running WEIGHT (a kind of bold) along the X-axis, SLANT (more or less italic) up the Y, and extending SUPERNESS (a kind of chutzpah) off into the Z beyond. We'll ignore CURLINESS for the time being, but we do have to account for a fourth factor, PEN, best conceived as a digital "nib" that determines the line's fundamental shape and angle at any given point.



Now let's send that point *constantly moving* through this imaginary cube. As it wanders randomly and aimlessly through the space, it trails a script that renders an alphabet whose form morphs according to its position relative to the other parameters—not forgetting the fact that the point-nib-pen itself is in perpetual flux. And, crucially, it never stops. The outcome might be usefully apprehended as the potentially endless matrix of Frutiger's Univers, amalgamated over time like Morison's Times New Roman, articulating itself in the manner of Bayer's Geometric Alphabet, over the precise wireframe of Louis XIV's Romain du Roi. Which amounts to a typographic oxymoron: a SINGLE typeface that's simultaneously MANY typefaces and never stops moving.

Naming this shapeshifter is easy enough—just shunt another couple of boxcars onto the end of the night train to arrive at (deep breath) Meta-The-Difference-Between-The-Two-Font-4-D, or MTDBT2F4D for short.

. . .

Writing in one place inevitably *performs* in another.

Here, for example, reflecting on Hofstadter's and Morison's and Groys' various assimilations of the terms "letter" and "spirit" fosters a more robust, compound sense of their allegorical purpose. It produces a cosmopolitan thought. When grappling with ideas in one domain is brought to bear on another, those ideas are more firmly grasped and so more readily utilized somewhere else … towards considering (say) the ways in which relative chauvinism and relative open-mindedness manifest themselves in daily life and work.

Or, equally, writing the first small script when learning a new programming language, the sole purpose of which is to generate two words that mark the border between instruction & instance. Swaddled in asterisks and set without a full point, this text always reads:

Hello world

4. Letter & Spirit

Dies ist ein Essay in Form eines animierten Texts, der die Geschichte der Rationalisierung von Schriftarten verfolgt. Er schließt mit einem Verweis auf sich selbst als zeitgemäßes typisches Beispiel. Gesetzt ist er in einer Schrift, die Zeitgenossenschaft mit Typografie verbindet und Meta-The-Difference-Between-The-2-Font-4-D, oder MTDBT2F4D heißt.

Bereits 2010 entwickelten Dexter Sinister eine frühere Version dieser selben Schriftart. Dabei handelte es sich um ein Update eines Projekts aus den frühen 1970er-Jahren mit dem Namen MetaFont, das von dem Computerwissenschaftler Donald Knuth aus Stanford stammte. Dahinter steckte der Versuch, eine Schrift zu entwickeln, die nicht der üblichen Familie verwandter Zeichensätze (Roman, fett, kursiv etc.) entsprach, sondern eher als anpassungsfähige Parameter funktionierten, die so optimiert werden konnten, dass sie unzählige Variationen derselben Grundform produzieren konnten. Dexter Sinisters Update übernahm Knuths ursprüngliche Idee zusammen mit seinen Original-Parametern. Daraus programmierten sie eine entsprechende Software für heutige Computer.

Diese erste, statische Version mit dem Namen Meta-The-Difference-Between-The-Two Font, oder MTDBT2F, wurde gleichzeitig in dem Essay „A Note on the Type" dokumentiert und vorgestellt. Er wurde erstmals im Katalog zur Gruppenausstellung The Curse of Bigness im Queens Museum of Art, New York (2010) publiziert. Hier diente die Schrift auch dazu, die bestehende Beschilderung des Museums zu ersetzen. Der Essay, der unter www.servinglibrary.org zum Download zur Verfügung steht, wurde zwischenzeitlich mehrfach neu veröffentlicht und überarbeitet. Hinzu kamen neue Beispiele, um die Veränderbarkeit der Schrift zu demonstrieren – etwa als Wandvinyl in der Ausstellung The Plastic Arts in der Gallery 400 an der University of Illinois, Chicago (2010); als Text in Dot Dot Dot #20 (2010); als Vinyl für die Ausstellungen A Note on the Signs auf der Artissima in Turin (2010) und A Note on the T bei den Graphic Design Worlds, Mailand (2011); als Text in den Journalen Bulletins of The Serving Library #1 (2011), Afterall 27 (2011) und Art in America (2013) sowie in dem Buch Graphic Design (History in the Making), Occasional Papers (2013). MTDBT2F findet zudem für weitere Projekte Anwendung, etwa das zweimal jährlich erscheinenden Journal Bulletins of The Serving Library, das von Dexter Sinisters Stuart Bailey und David Reinfurt zusammen mit der Autorin und Künstlerin Angie Keefer produziert wird.

Eine nachfolgende Version der Schrift, Meta-The-Difference-Between-The-2-Font-4-D, unternimmt den Versuch, der ursprünglichen Setzung von Knuth einen weiteren Parameter hinzuzufügen: *Zeit*. Das ergibt eine Schrift, die sich stets bewegt. Ein zweiter Essay, „Letter & Spirit", der zunächst im Bulletins of The Serving Library #3 (2012) veröffentlicht wurde, basiert auf der Geschichte, wie sie detailliert in „A Note on the Time" dargestellt wurde. Während der erste Essay sich jedoch auf die zur Diskussion stehende Schrift konzentrierte, in der er auch gesetzt war, beschränkt sich der zweite auf die Beständigkeit von Druck oder Pixeln. Deshalb entstand auch die Produktion einer animierten Version, die neu ediert und so ausgeführt wurde, um in der Öffentlichkeit projiziert zu werden. Präziser ließe sich die Animation deshalb als ein „Programm, das ein Skript betreibt" beschreiben. Denn was der Betrachter wahrnimmt, ist eine Software, die in Echtzeit läuft. Wie sein statischer Vorläufer fand MTDBT2F4D in verschiedenen Kontexten Anwendung, beispielsweise als Identität für die Kadist Art Foundation, die sich über einen Zeitraum von zehn Jahren allmählich verändert. Die erste Version von Letter & Spirit erschien als 35-mm-Film und wurde in Zusammenarbeit mit Jürg Lehni als Teil der Moving Picture Show in Chaumont in Frankreich (2012) produziert.

Wiederabgedruckt ist hier die originale Langversion von Letter & Spirit, gesetzt in MTDBT2F, wie im Bulletins of The Serving Library #3 (2012). Diese Ausgabe des Bulletins diente auch als Katalog zur Gruppenausstellung Ecstatic Alphabets / Heaps of Language am MoMA in New York (2012). Die animierte MTDBT2F4D, die am Ende des Essays diskutiert wurde, wurde auch erstmals für die Wiedergabe von „Trailer for the Exhibition Catalog" verwendet, das als Dexter Sinisters Arbeit in der Ausstellung zu sehen war. Der Essay steht ebenfalls unter www.servinglibrary.org zum Download zur Verfügung.

4. Letter & Spirit

This is an essay in the form of an animated text that tracks the history of the rationalization of typefaces, then concludes by pointing to itself as a recent case in point. It is set in a font that adds temporality to typography called Meta-The-Difference-Between-The-2-Font-4-D, or MTDBT2F4D.

In 2010, Dexter Sinister developed an earlier version of the same typeface by updating a project from the late 1970s called MetaFont by Stanford computer scientist Donald Knuth. MetaFont was Knuth's attempt to conceive a typeface not as the usual family of related fonts (roman, bold, italic, etc.), but rather as a set of adjustable parameters that could be tweaked to produce countless variations on the same skeleton form. Dexter Sinister's update took Knuth's original idea, along with his original parameters, and programmed a piece of equivalent software to run on current computers and yield industry-standard PostScript fonts.

This first, static version, called MTDBT2F, was simultaneously documented and demonstrated in an essay called 'A Note on the Type'. This was first published in the catalogue to the group exhibition The Curse of Bigness at the Queens Museum of Art, New York (2010), where the font was also used to replace the museum's existing signage. The essay (available to download from www.servinglibrary.org) has since been republished and reworked – incorporating new 'sample' excerpts to demonstrate the font's morphing ability – as wall vinyl that comprised an exhibition called The Plastic Arts, Gallery 400 at University of Illinois, Chicago (2010); as a text in Dot Dot Dot #20 (2010); in vinyl for the exhibitions A Note on the Signs at Artissima, Torino (2010), and A Note on the T at Graphic Design Worlds, Milan (2011); as a text in the journals Bulletins of The Serving Library #1 (2011), Afterall 27 (2011), and Art in America (2013), and in the book Graphic Design (History in the Making), Occasional Papers (2013). MTDBT2F is also used to typeset a wide variety of other projects, such as the biannual journal produced by Dexter Sinister's Stuart Bailey and David Reinfurt together with writer and artist Angie Keefer, Bulletins of The Serving Library.

The subsequent version of the font, Meta-The-Difference-Between-The-2-Font-4-D, attempts to add a new parameter to Knuth's original set: *time*. This yields a typeface that is always moving. A second essay, 'Letter & Spirit', first published in Bulletins of The Serving Library #3, (2012), builds on the story detailed in 'A Note on the Time' from 'a higher point of disinterest'. However, where the first essay effectively demonstrates itself by being set in the typeface under discussion, the second is relatively limited by the fixity of print or pixels; hence the production of an animated version, re-edited and rendered to be projected in public. In fact, the animation is more properly described as 'a program that runs a script', because what the viewer

perceives is a piece of software running in realtime. Like it's static forerunner, MTDBT2F4D has been applied in different contexts, including an identity for Kadist Art Foundation that shapeshifts slowly over a contracted ten-year period. A trial version of Letter & Spirit was rendered on 35mm film and produced in collaboration with Jürg Lehni as part of Moving Picture Show, Chaumont, France (2012).

Reprinted here is the original longform version of 'Letter & Spirit' typeset in MTDBT2F, as published in Bulletins of The Serving Library #3 (2012). This issue of Bulletins doubled as an catalogue-of-sorts for the group exhibition Ecstatic Alphabets / Heaps of Language at MoMA New York (2012), and the animated MTDBT2F4D discussed at the essay's end was first used to render a 'Trailer for the Exhibition catalogue-of-sorts', displayed as Dexter Sinister's work in the show. The essay is also available to download from www.servinglibrary.org.

Time is like that — both point *and* duration.

This is how it can bend and warp. A week, a second, a season: all are specific and discrete, but none are the same. The present can be cut to any number of lengths, from a single vibration of a quartz crystal to the display period of a digital timepiece.

Watch Wyoscan 0.5Hz is a reverse-engineered Casio digital watch. A tiny computer inside has been reprogrammed to slowly render the current time from left to right, **scanning** across its liquid crystal face, completing 1 cycle every 2 seconds.

You'll notice that reading this watch requires more attention than usual, as the seven segments of each digit are lit one by one across its display. This speed may be adjusted until it reaches *the limits of your perception*. You and your watch are now in tune.

Watch Wyoscan was adjusted by Dexter Sinister and produced by Halmos with support from Objectif Exhibitions, Antwerp, and Yale Union, Portland. It is available *now* (USD $175) in select retail shops and online at www.halmos.us.com.

WATCH WYOSCAN 0.5 Hz

Photograph: Jason Fulford

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Dexter Sinister
On a Universal Serial Bus.*
3. Oktober bis 22. November 2015

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Koordiniert von / Co-ordinated by
Nina Gscheider

Produziert von / Produced by
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Clara Brockhaus, Saim Demircan, Chris Fitzpatrick, Nina Gscheider, Ines Wiskemann

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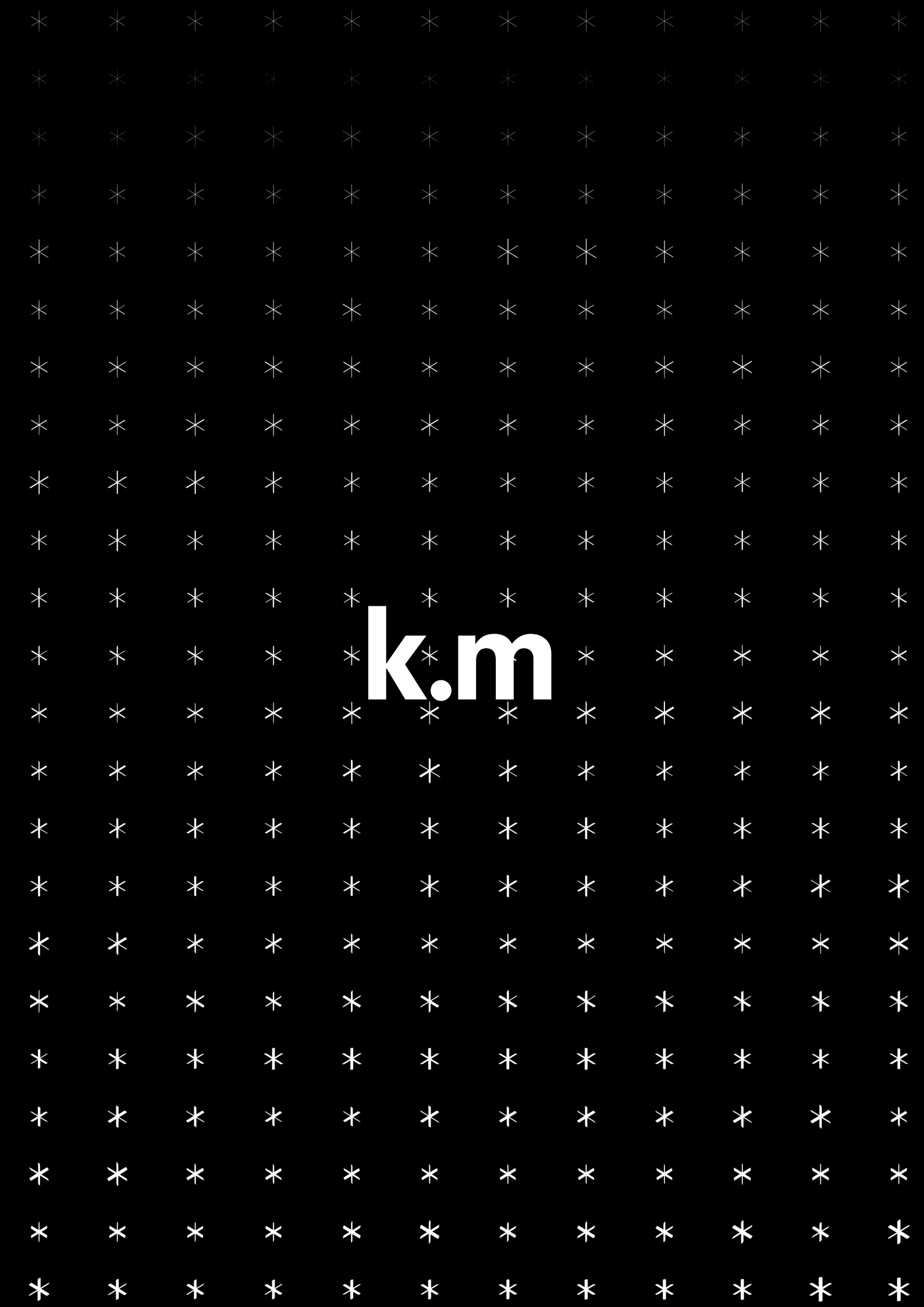
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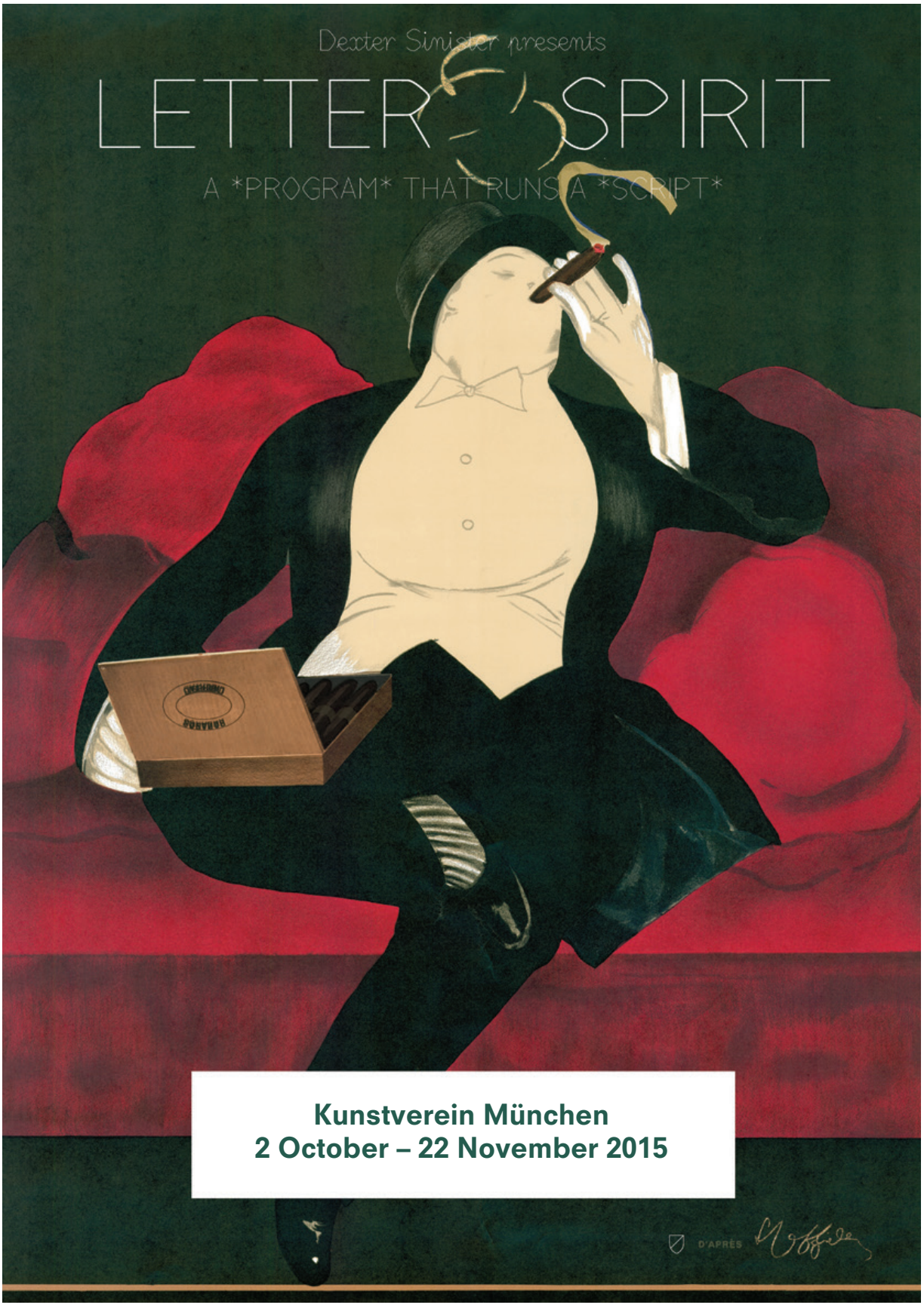
On a Universal Serial Bus.*



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