Summative Assessment

Unit 01: Methods

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01 Methods of Investigating

An Enquiry into the Palimpsest of Camden Passage and its Practices of Consumption

Getting Started

1.0. Snapshot of Camden Passage on a Monday

1.1. Snapshot of Camden Passage on a Monday

For this first assignment, I wanted newer methods of 'seeing' by trying mediums that are not natural to my practice. For. eg, photography - and within it, newer ways like distributing subjects with colours and texture.

For my location, I chose '**Camden Passage**,' a narrow walkway lined with boutique shops and cafes near Angel, Islington.

As a newcomer to London at the time, I wanted to explore this location to **understand the contrast in the picture-perfect fantasy of a city like London with its actual reality.**

While the lane of Camden Passage is lined with many, many stores, I started my experiments by focussing on the open antique and secondhand wares market, especially Pierrepont Antiques. The sinophilic stores display a large collection of blue and white porcelain artefacts, large calligraphic prints and Buddha statues under a blanket-branding of East Asian curiosities. Stephanie*, the proprietor, let me photograph her store (while adamantly refusing to let me take her picture).

*She spoke perfect Italian, English with a distilled British accent, and a bit of French. Goes to show how many layers exist within the place - embodying the diversity of London.

Early Experiments: Photography

In the antique market was a display of china, saturated with antique glazed porcelain and opaque colour pigments. **How do you sort what you're seeing in a busy room?**

I tried photographing them with B&W filter only selectively choosing colour, and sorting them in primary colours.

Distilling the visual details into categories of blue, red and yellow. **Stories, figures and new connections emerge when distributed by colour**: embellishments, backgrounds become gold - narrative elements become blue, royalty becomes red!

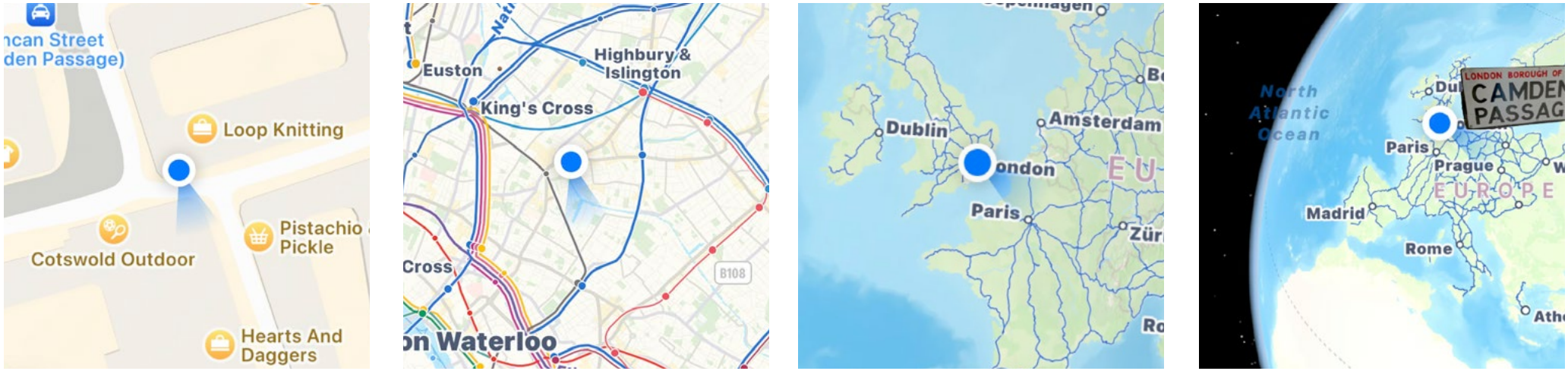
Early Experiments: Sketching

(Top) The first attempt was messier, and it reminded me of Perec's quote in his book ***Species of Spaces***, under the topic of exploring Foreign Towns (which was precisely my case).

(Bottom) The second attempt, I decided to be slower and use cleaner lines to look at objects bit by bit and label them. I started to notice patterns and shapes, helping me to simplify the scene in front of me.

I started to point out details in my sketches, like fabrics (fur cap coat), type and figures (£5 scarves), the store proprietor who looked at me over a couple times, wondering what I was scribbling in my book in front of her shop, the crowd density from 2 pm till 4 pm (see page right), and the wind that blew into my face, shuffling all my pages and running a shiver down my spine. **A renewed image of the space began to form in my mind as different points that grabbed my attention began to converge in my sketches.**

Early Experiments: Scaling with Maps



1.3. Apple Maps Screenshots of 'scaling' my personal location to situate myself in this new area

A final experiment involved looking at maps - to capture the essence of being in a new space, **of feeling removed even if you are present in the space**. It was to capture the alienation that I could tangibly feel on my skin, of being in a city "in another part of the world", a thought that collided with my perception of space.

This approach was more personal, but a little outside the scope of the assignment and it would bend the idea of observation of a smaller space.

Up Next

From these experiments, I decided to move towards **sketching as a form of investigating** for my assignment as it would be a meaningful way to cover the many, moving details that gathered to create the fabric of Camden Passage.

Sketching as Investigation

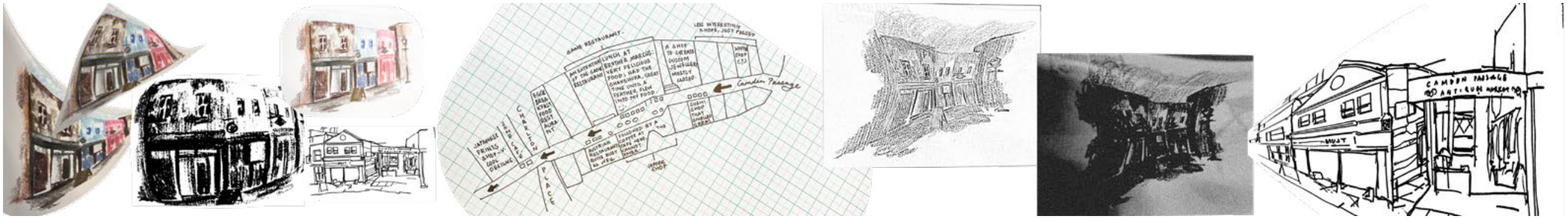
Across Week 02, I used sketching and collage as a form of **reportage illustration to create new landscapes of the area**. Wandering through the area during the quiet and peak hours, deconstructing different elements that composed the space as a whole, it observed of **how space was being used - who occupied it, for how long and why.**

For this iteration, I kept the sketches loose and fast to capture moments and motion - and focussed on a part of the length of the lane instead of the antique store itself.

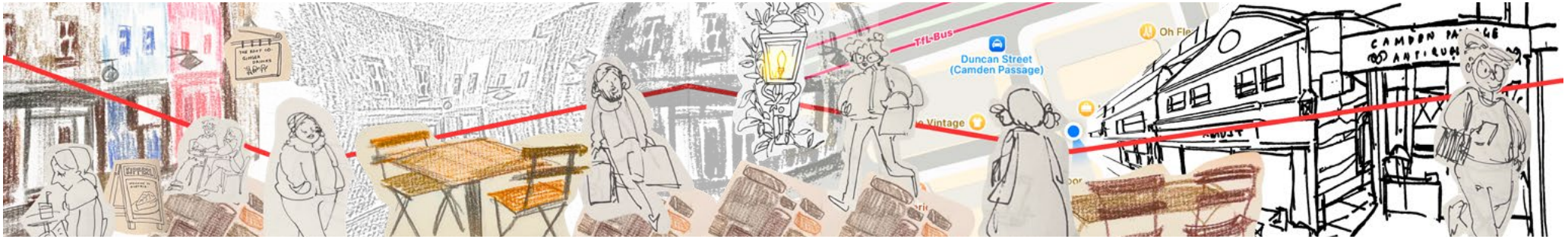
For this week, I collected sketches and notes of the people, places, and fragments that make up Camden Passage. I received feedback encouraging to make clearer **why I chose these specific subjects and to examine the meanings embedded within them**, so that the purpose of my observations becomes more explicit.

1.4. (From Top Right) Categorising sketches with signs, lights, objects and customers that visited Camden Passage.

Changing Form



1.5. Distorted buildings drawn from varied viewpoints, side-on, from below, exaggerating their scale and shifting the atmosphere from jovial to more ominous.



1.6. A collage assembling the emotional, temporal, and visual trajectory of passing through the area.

In this experiment, to frame illustration as a form of note-taking- and as a practice of becoming immersed in observation- I referenced Guy **Debord's theory of the dérive (1956)**.

The *dérive*, closely linked to psychogeography, considers how environments — streets, architecture, spatial layouts — shape emotion and behaviour. Rather than approaching the city as a functional map, it is experienced sensorially and affectively.

Building on this, I began to **iterate on the landscape by distorting my sketches**: shifting perspective, drawing from multiple angles, and **mapping the emotional rhythm** of moving through Camden Passage. I recombined these fragments to reconstruct the site as **an experiential, rather than literal landscape.**

A Look Into Camden Passage

Built in the 1800s and revived in the 1960s as a notable market, Camden Passage now sits at the intersection of **accessible antiquity and curated modernity.**

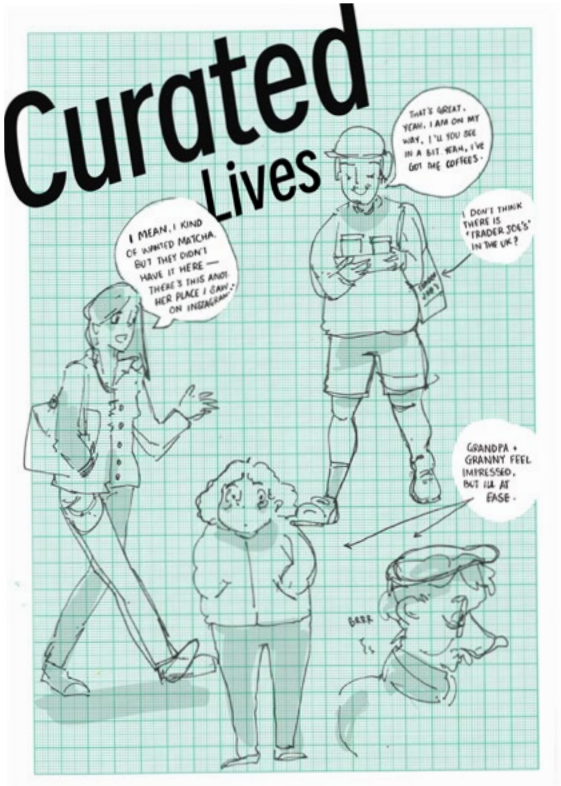
To examine this tension, I used layers of transparency to **contrast the enduring architectural elements, such as buildings and cobblestones, with its more transient, contemporary additions, including storefronts, seating, signage, and shifting occupants**. This approach highlights which aspects of its legacy are preserved, and which are continually replaced or rebranded, and build from one layer onto another.

`The layers of transparency create a **palimpsest** of Camden Passage, of **history mixed with aspirational modernity**, with a high-value consumer base, and a **working class that quietly sustains the lane in the background.**

1.7. (From left to right) Every transparent layer adds onto the becoming of Camden Passage, each of it a filter of the "image" - from cobblestones to trendy cafes and storefront, from working class to affluent consumers.

A Look Into Camden Passage

I focused on its inhabitants (customers, onlookers, stallholders), **mapping visible and invisible semantics present in their belongings, personal effects and conversations that drive a social and class divide by design.**

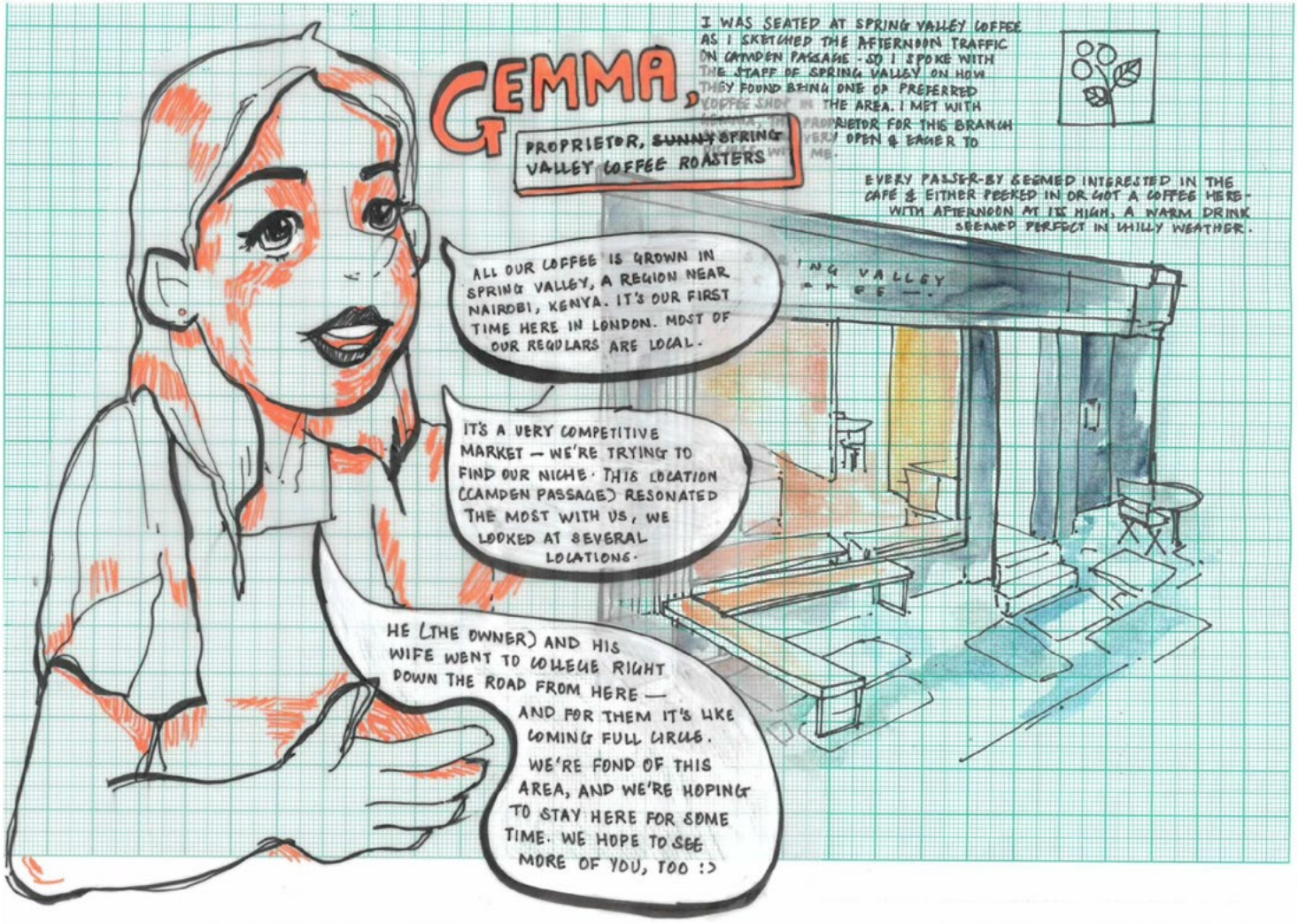


1.8. (Above) In my observations, I overheard moments and conversations where people interacted with the space. People came to take pictures for social media, to have a coffee that can be a symbol of a restful day instead of a hectic morning need a caffeine headstart.

1.9. (Above) As afternoons drew in, the crowd turns creative, younger. The image of wealth becomes subdued, and that of taste and aspiration rises.

1.10. (Above) People were mostly well-dressed, with designer carry-ons. The landscape worked for their appearance, and the appearance of the lane benefitted from a tasteful clientele.

A Look Into Camden Passage



1.11. (Left) For this interation, I was inspired by the **journalistic illustrations of Olivier Kugler**, *who ethnographically and in-situ created new information through illustration art.*

To conclude my set of illustrations, I wanted a peek into the life of an every-day commuter of Camden Passage, someone who is backstage, running the show. Gemma, the kind proprietor of the cafe from where I sat and sketched, offered some insight.

It was evident through her answers that Camden Passage wasn't just a location for her business, but also the image of it.

Reflections and Future Development

Reflections

Through this exercise, I was able to see Camden Passage allowing for both performance and refuge. Camden Passage offers an anachronistic urban fantasy - fueled by consumption and a bit of escapism.

Sketching it is tracing the line between authenticity and artifice, participation and critique. Illustration becomes the spatial enquiry of how design, taste, ideology all intertwines in the walls and surface of city that is new to experience and perpetually imagined.

Future Development

To further develop this project, I am interested in collecting these illustrations in a publication form that will become a container for an illustrated journal of Camden Passage.

Futhermore, I would like to delve deeper into the anthropological detail of the project, conduct more interviews to create an even fairer journalistic image of the locality.

02 Methods of Cataloguing

Uncredited: The Lost Composers of Western Classical Music (1700-1900)

Getting Started

For cataloguing, I selected 16 titles from the “Libretti and Operatic Scores” set of rare printed/handwritten music discovered over time, from the Harvard Digital Collection.

Western printed music possesses a distinctive and historical language for codifying abstract sonic details and technique markers, great for cataloguing and understanding their relationship with their work. This was my first point of interest.

However, as music documentation advanced significantly and gained popularity with the invention of the printing press after the 15th century, “printed” music started to adopt the same nuances present in the publishing industry.

I wanted to explore the intersection of publishing and music industry, particularly in the metadata of these “documents.”

Title pages

Explorations

I began analysing the set through their materiality, format, language, year of production and authorship. It started to create a clearer picture of the industry at the time.

Through analysing format, it became clear **how accessibility to printed music increased through the 18th and 19th century, as did their production quality. With increase in etching and letterpress printing, music production started to develop a strong visual language on not only the contents of the book, but also on its fringes and covers.**

Books, at the time were bound after purchasing so the title page remained a crucial means of holding all necessary information till it could be bound. **It took on new calligraphy, new etching styles and more and became an artpiece in itself - extolling the music that resided in its walls.**

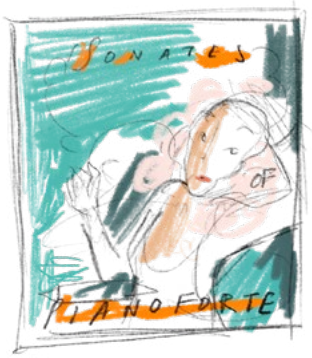
As parlour music (home-playing friendly music) became popular, **there was freer access to major composers such as Bach and Mozart - and it began to show on the covers.** With this basis, I began exploring the recataloguing of the title covers for this assignment.

Experimentation + Detour

A I began experimenting with ideas for this project, I know **redrawing as a way of reorganising these sets was something I was interested in.**

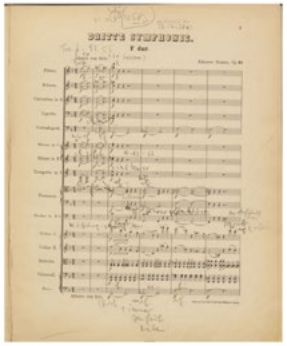
1. Temporal Translation:

Understanding how music visual identity could be translated across different eras: reintepreting new album covers for these classical artists.



2. Metadata Translation:

Using annotations and marks made by the artists to reorganise this information.



3. Translating new music identity into Classical forms

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Using details like handwriting, old-style graphic details to represent the contemporary pop

Change in Plans:

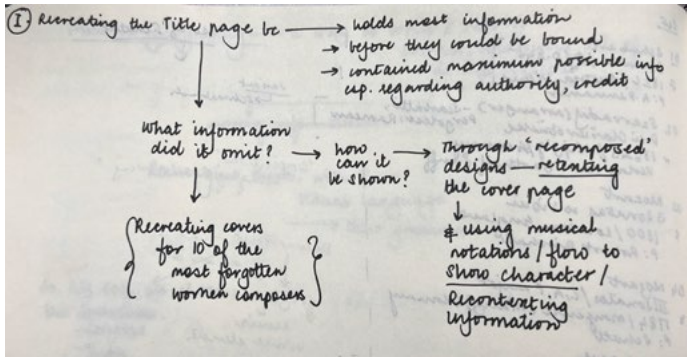
As I tried to classify this set through the filters above, **I couldn't find a critical enquiry compelling enough.**

Instead of trying to realise the documents in a contemporary form, I went back to the set and began going through the details.

I looked through the typeset (Eg. Use of Fraktur, in the reign of Germanic Composers) , to understand the visual flavour of the work - but still felt similar block as I did with the earlier ideas.

While I was zoning in on the details, I found the invisible subtext in the titles and found a detail which was glaringly obvious in hindsight, but something history had conditioned us to ignore: **The lack of female composers on the list of authorship.**

This gave me a new angle to rework the data without losing the integrity of the original work.



(Top) Trying to reverse-engineering the "block" by flowcharting the process

Experimentation + Detour

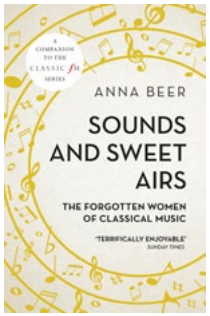
For the bulk of my process then, I focused on representing the histories of female composers in the Classical and Romantic period of Western Classical Music.

I shortlisted 8 Female Composers who had in part, or conditionally been disadvantaged through the history of music:

1. Marianna Martines
2. Elisabeth De Le Guerre
3. Louise Farrenc
4. Lili Boulanger
5. Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel
6. Amy Beach
7. Dora Pejačević
8. Augusta Holmes

This project found its critical enquiry through this iteration:
it aims to recontextualise the glorious "title- pages" of the sheet music in the name of the few that were uncovered, especially the women who in part or completely had to give up their careers to meet the archaic expectations of womanhood, and recreates to immortalise their place among the classics.

It felt full circle to use Graphic Communication Design to restore this lost piece of history and information as this gap had admittedly been created by graphic design as well.



One of my key references in my research was Anna Beer's *Sounds and Sweet Airs*, that explored the histories of female composers who went unheard.

Beer, A.R. (2016). *Sounds and sweet airs : the Forgotten Women of Classical Music*. London: Onewor.

A Cover from the original set

Mimicking the elaborateness of the frame and delicateness of details

The piece of by the composer, in its full glory

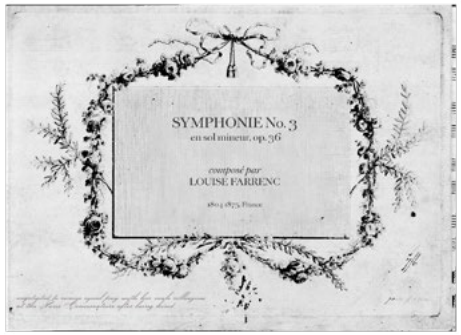
(Fonts to match the original hand)

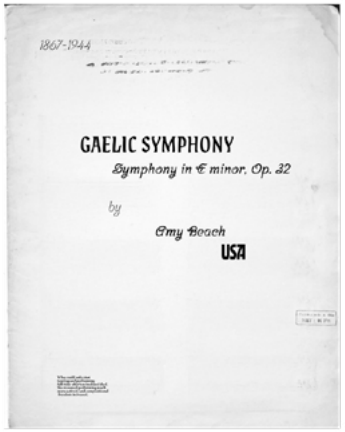
The name of the composer

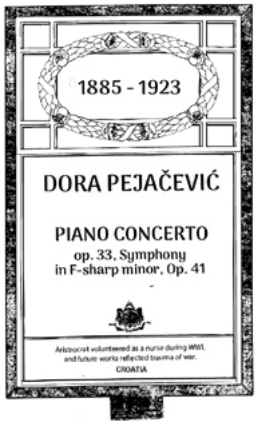
(Often female composers were just called Mrs., as opposed ot their full name)

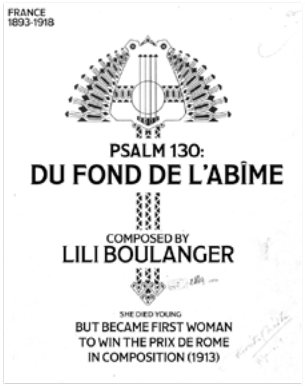
A significant contribution or circumstance that defined their life as a musician in the furniture of the title page

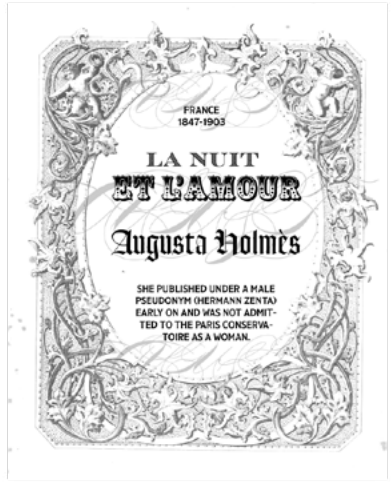
A New Set for Female Composers











Developing the Titles into Books

A point that still bothered me in this enquiry was that **I did not want to present a catalogue of the injustices that they suffered - instead honour them.**

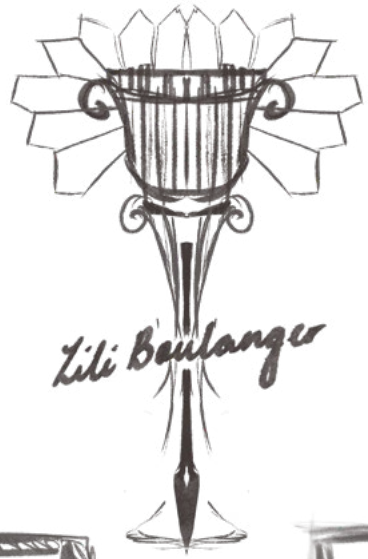
I decided to further the project by making small publications to carry that out, **with the covers carrying details of their work and life.**

I wanted to honour Clara Schumann and Fanny Mendelssohn - and revisited their set through editing their title pages through the lens of their pieces and illustrated visualisations of their work - made while listening to their work.

(Right) I tried to create some other ornamental covers based off their personality or merits, focussing on the main achievements of their lives, and the primary facet that shaped their careers. Eg. Pejacevic (far-right illustration) was a Nurse, which heavily influenced her work, which I tried to represent with the red-cross mixed with the piano.

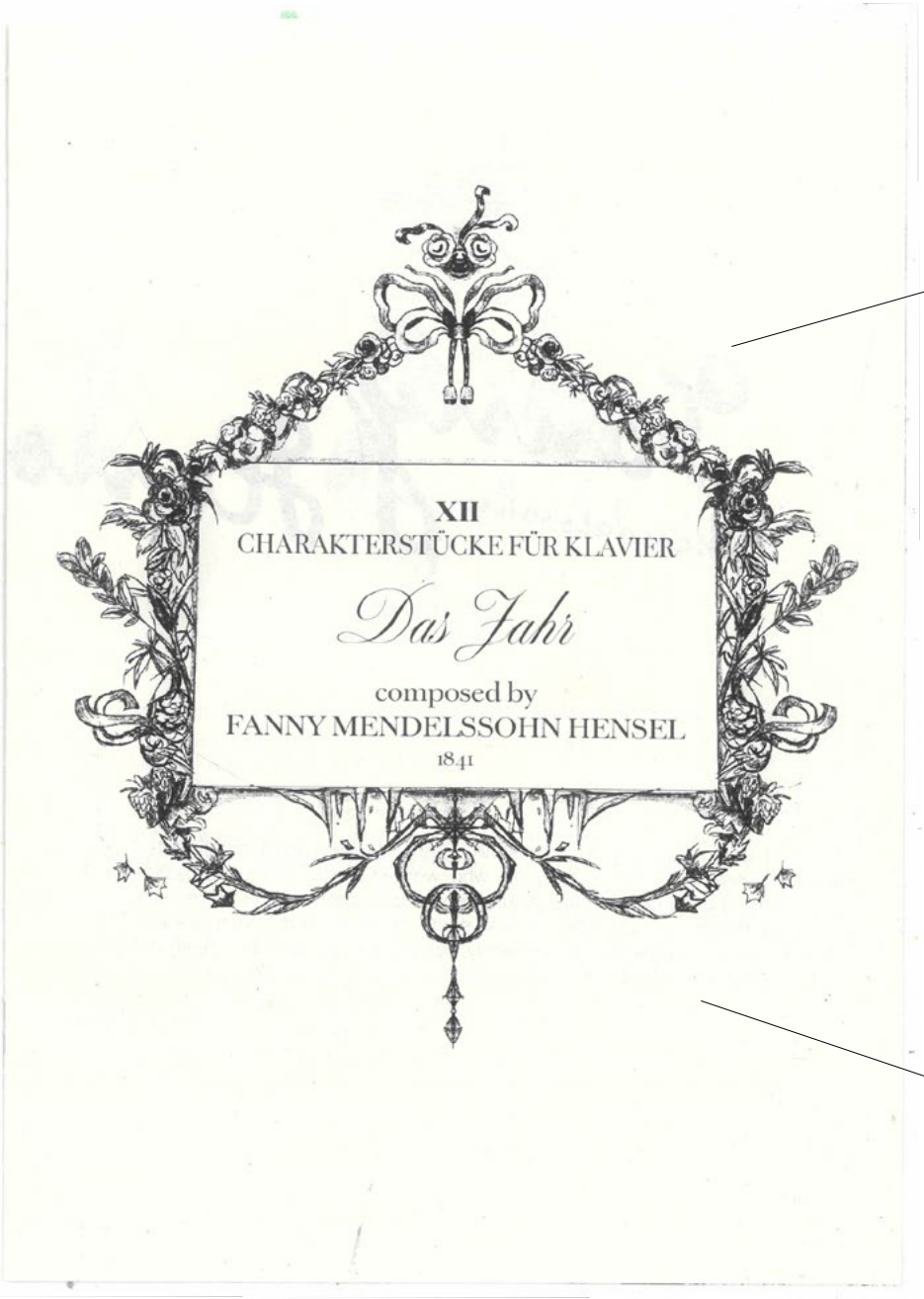
I focussed on maintaining their narrative within the visual language of the era, zeroing on Clara Schumann and Fanny Mendelssohn in the interest of time.

(Below) Boulanger was the first woman to win Prix de Rome competition



(Top) de la Guerre was a child prodigy

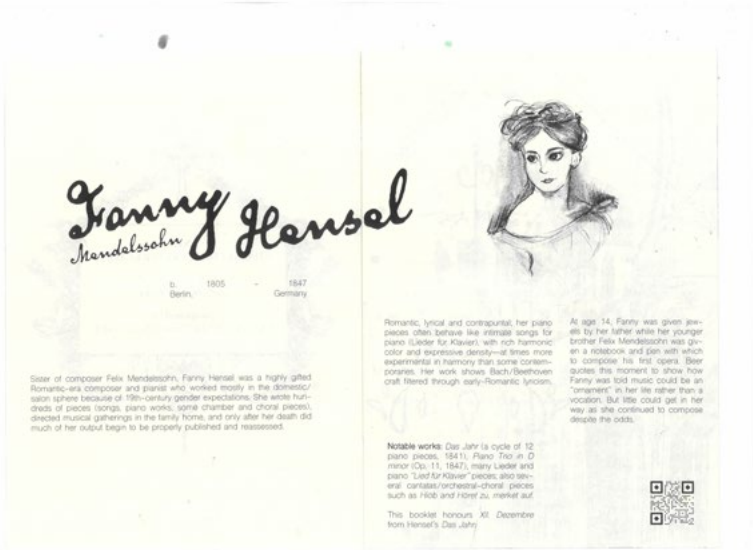
(Top) Pejacevic was a nurse, and much of her music was deeply affected by her experiences nursing the victims of WW2.



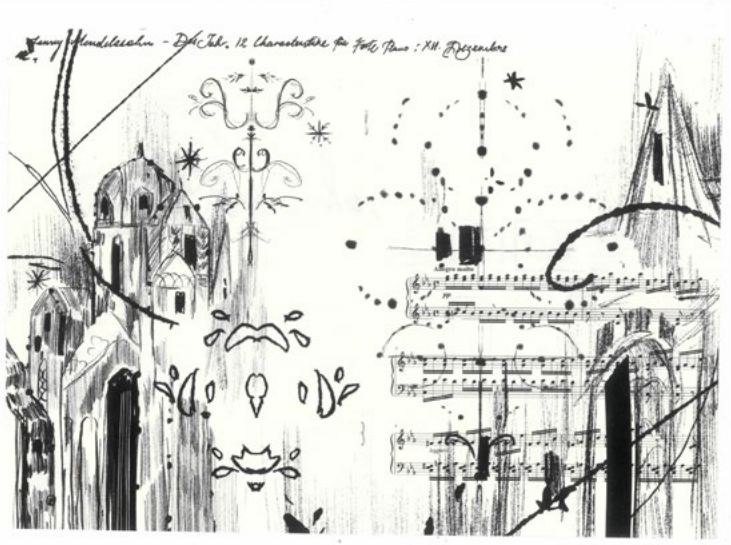
(Left) *Das Jahr* was composed by Hensel in honour of the 12 months of the year, a song composed for each. The wreath` around her nameplate on the cover depicts similarly: it starts from a blossoming spring from the top, a hefty summer on the sides, fall as descends to the bottom and ends at icy beauty of winter.

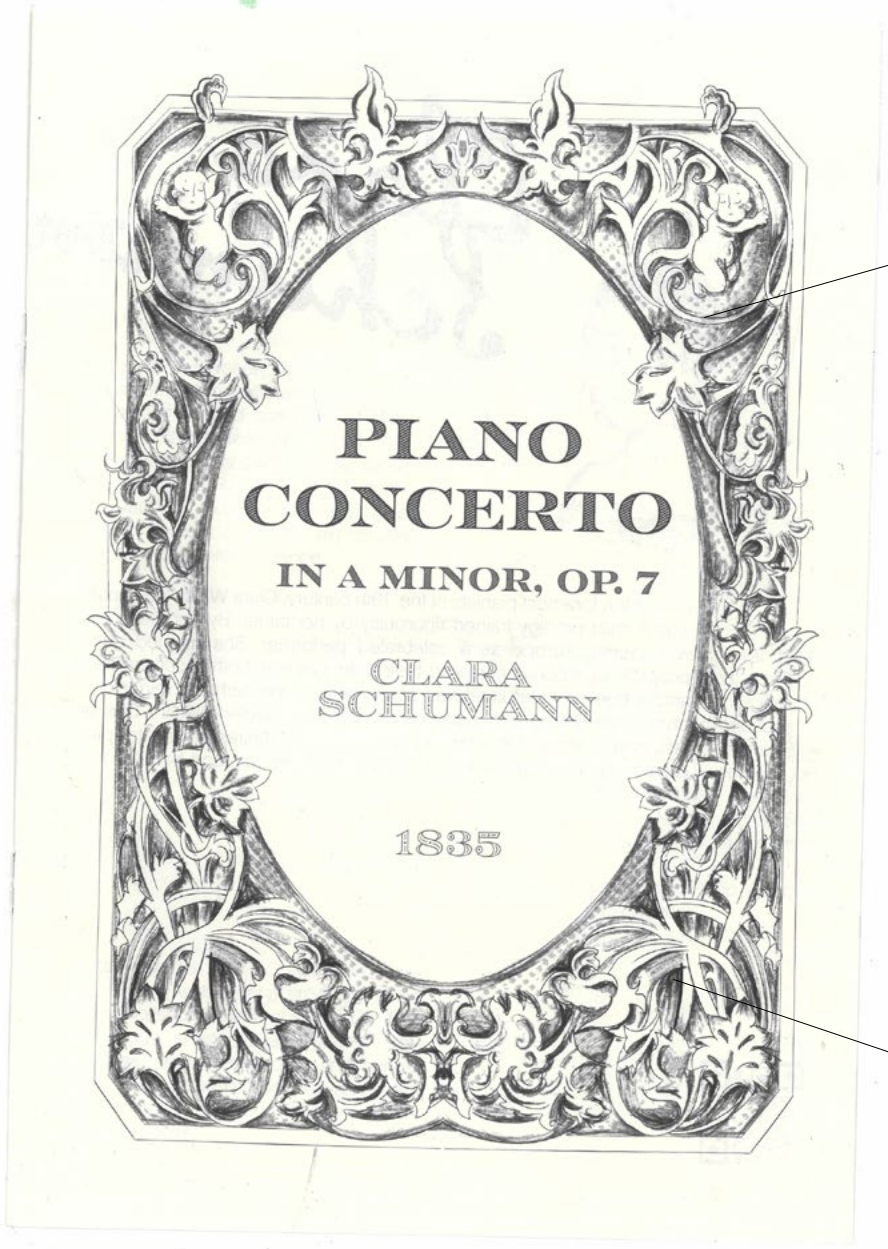
Schumann

(Top) Her info-page covers her history, and a QR code sits at the bottom, to scan and link to her music.



(Below) The illustration spread after her information page visualises the last song of her album, December - through snowy castles and delicate patterns of snowflakes. Although distinct from the style of the cover, this becomes a effigy of how her music lives on - even after all these years.

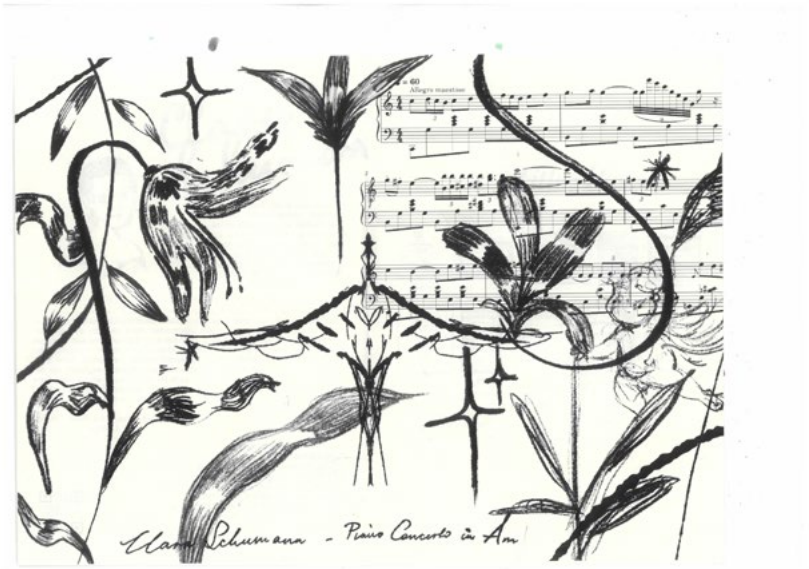




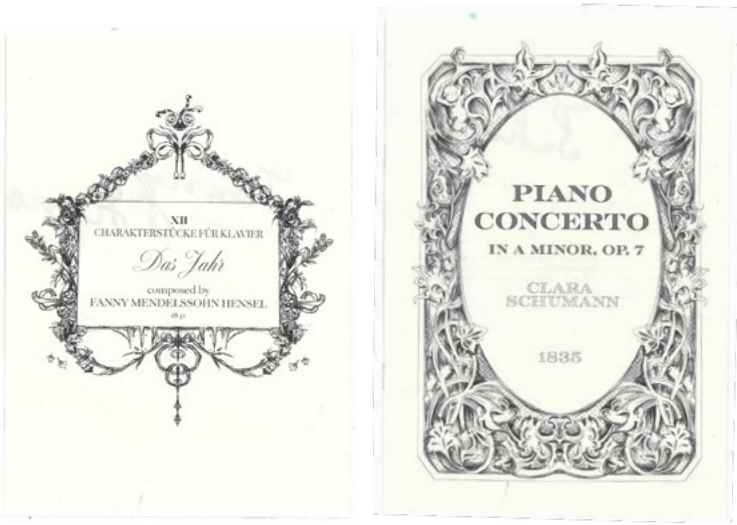
(Top) Schumann's *Piano Concerto* is an incredibly sweet song, but with a melancholy tone that often overshadowed Clara Schumann's life. With eight children, she had dedicated her life to motherhood (see: Cherubs on the top corners of the cover) despite her longing to make music - but she carried on as a breadwinner, elegantly and graciously even after her husband's failing health. Her life was woven in with different roles that shape the elaborate texture of the frame.

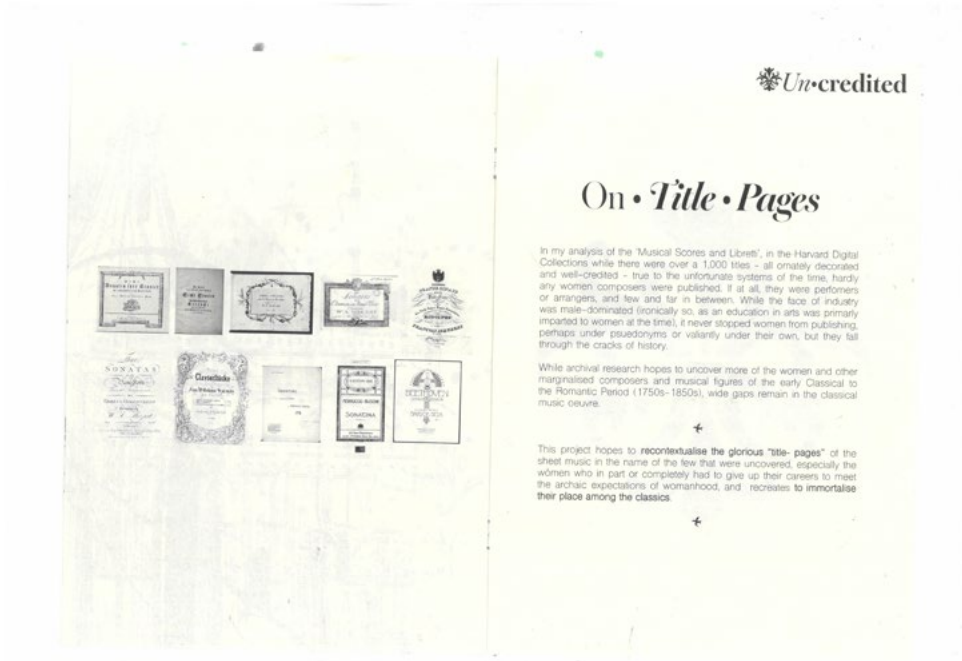
Das Jahr

(Top) A page in the booklet expand on Clara's life and the various roles she took on. The QR code in the corner links to her work.



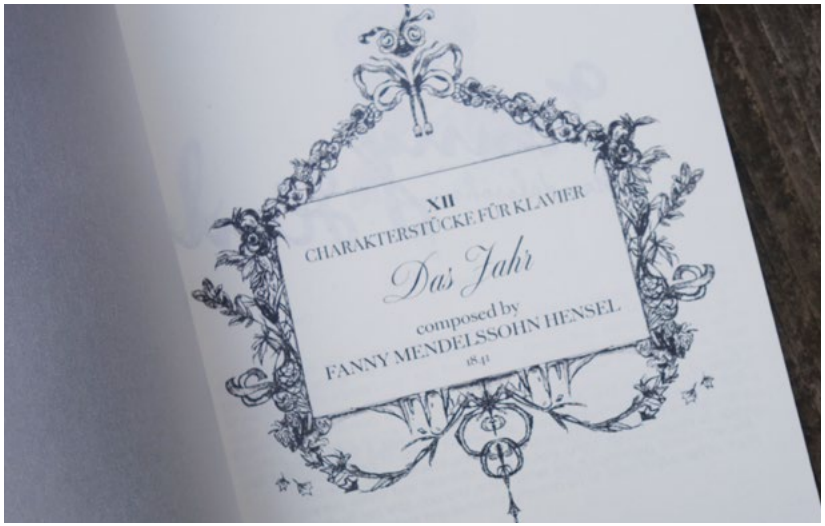
(Below) The illustration spread for Clara Schumann visualises her want for freedom. There is elegance and mastery in her work, but there was also the sadness of not being able to claim it.





A layer of transparent paper covers the title-page and the back (the back is adorned with the large brocade motif of the project, shining in an ominous onyx tone) - and they protect the pages, while giving a glimpse into its contents.

A blurb "On Title Pages" sits on the last page, explaining the project enquiry and contextualising the work, connecting the pieces of the catalog with one another.


XII
CHARAKTERSTÜCKE FÜR KLAVIER
Das Jahr
composed by
FANNY MENDELSSOHN HENSEL
op.10

Un•credited
On • Title • Pages

03 Methods of Translating

Bureaucratic Chameleon:
Shifting Identities on a Visa

Getting Started

For methods of translating, I chose a topic that came to me most instinctively when I saw the ID card I now use as a bookmark hanging from my notice board.

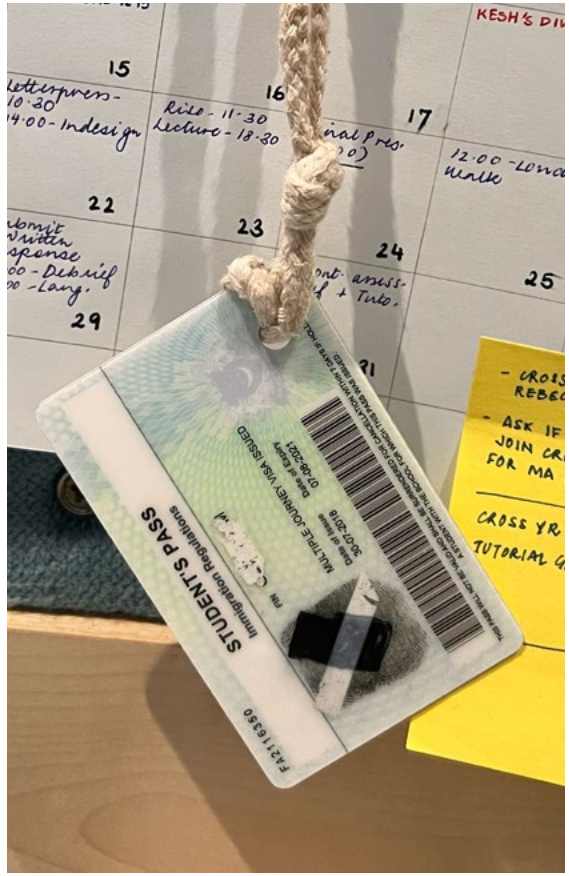
For over 8 years, the ID Card - my residence pass- was secure in my wallet, ready to brandish at any given moment, and allowing me to reside and contribute in one of the strongest economies in today's world- but now that it is past its validity, it has essentially become a relic and a toy.

For many immigrants, or 'expats' (if they are past a certain tax bracket), a visa is the hinge that gives them both freedom and keeps them in a capitivity of sorts - gatekeeping movement and immigration and charging exorbitant amount of money to buy access.

While it is now customary for most nations to demand a visa to travel in their territory, who exactly is benefitting from this system?

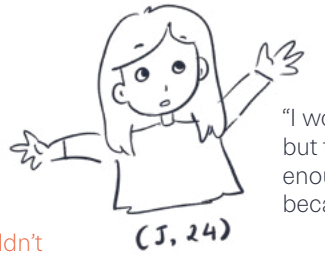
There are many bureaucratic, national and security aspects to the machine that govern and regulate immigration - a lot that remain outside the scope of both this project and the knowledge of the common person - but its impact, that ripples most disproportionately in the Global South, is an indication of its imbalance of power.

For Methods of Translating, I wanted to explore the expansion of these clinical bureaucratic systems to the human experience of identities that hinge on documents that are subject to expiration.



3.1. my new bookmark!

Exploration



"I worked really hard at my job, but they never compensated me well enough. They knew I wouldn't say anything because I needed the visa."

"My parents couldn't come for my graduation. They didn't get their visa."

"I was too scared to go back home during COVID because what if they didn't take me back? You know, with the number of cases coming from India?"

Application (subject to rejection) Est. costs = anywhere between **£50 - £1170** depending on where you're applying	**£1=₹116**
No refund for failed applications	Est. costs anywhere between= **₹2000 to ₹136,262.81**
	avg. monthly income (in middle upper class jobs)= **<₹200,000 = <£1,179**

3.2. (Top) Calculation of Visa costs for travel to UK/US for most short term travellers from South Asia, as of Dec.2025

To begin this project, I began to collect personal anecdotes from family and friends on how much effort in time and money is required to apply for a visa, especially for an American, UK travel or residence visa - including medical and language tests, tickets and more, a lot of which was repetitive as the same requirements persisted for other visas.

Besides the cost, there was the mention of the experience of constantly living under the threat of a deadline and the anxiety of a visa being cancelled - which is both stressful and sad, as friends and family part ways with lives they have created over the years.

I referenced "Visa inequalities:...'You are not supposed to be here'" by Devran Gülel to advance my understanding of the geopolitical reality this topic - and he furthers the point of 'Visa processes serving as **tools of systemic exclusion that disproportionately affect Global South scholars** and cause financial, psychological and temporal burdens.' (Gülel, 2025).

While he speaks mostly for academic exchange, it is also experience and cultural exchange that suffers at the hands of privilege hierarchies created by geopolitics.

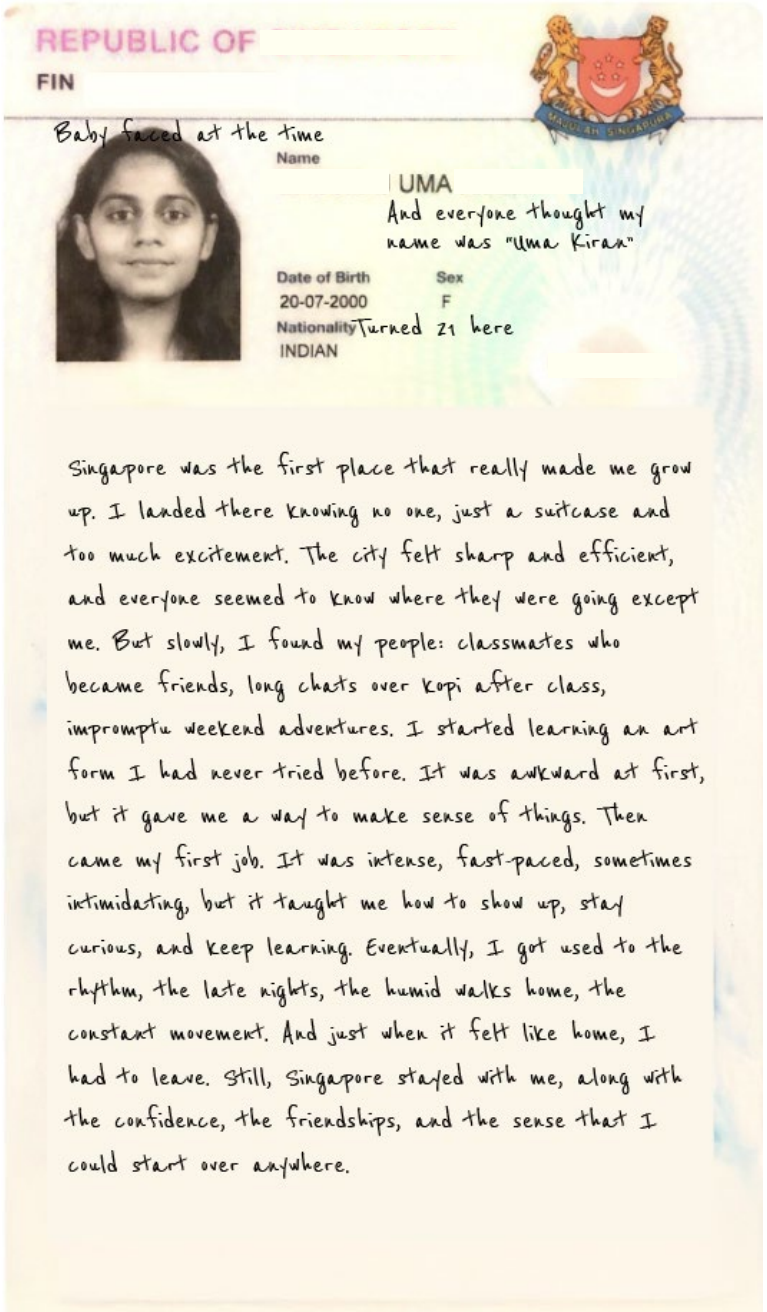
Gülel, D. (2025). Navigating visa inequities: mobility as privilege in academia – 'You are not supposed to be here'. Global Social Challenges Journal, pp.1–10. doi:https://doi.org/10.1332/275233499y2025d000000050.

Experiment 01

My experiments began with translating the “semantics” and “visual language of bureaucracy into something deeply personal.

How do you substantiate this document IC/ID Card? **The identity card is reductive. It has very little information and far too much power.** One of the first experiments was to create ID Card/ IC that is an elaboration of the smaller, standard one, which encapsulates and archives the human experiences that card allows.

The idea was on iterating on the visual identity of a card and keep annotating it till its full and exhausted.

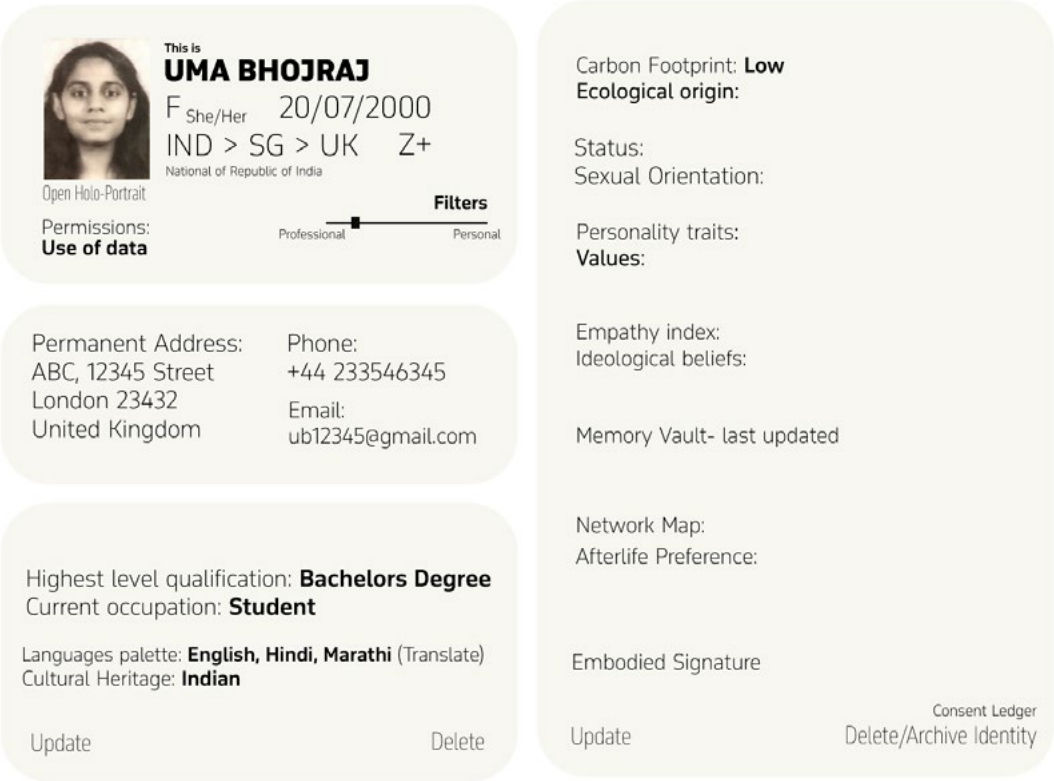


3.3 Experiment 1: The IC / Visa extends into a longer document, that reveals a personal anecdote about each ID card.

Experiment 02

As a piece of speculative design, what would an all-encompassing IC look like? Would it contain nationality? Age? Sex? Languages? This experiment teased the idea of identity being inexhaustible.

This card aimed to give maximum control to the person who the card to belonged to, instead of their place of origin, and transfer power to the person from the regime.



3.4. Experiment 2: The Speculative IC has all levels of filters so the identity can remain fluid as it is transported from one person to another.

Experiment 03

When the passport is not strong enough, even for short term travel visit, the visa application of certain nations demand personal information that almost feels invasive.

Citizenship becomes capitalist property (you can buy it and save yourself the troubles of the proletariat), and the passport becomes brand identity.

In this experiment, I wanted to create a full "general" / "first world" Visa application, **annotating the file as I go with personal notes as I go. I wanted to create an application that encapsulates the perfect* resident.**

Up Next:

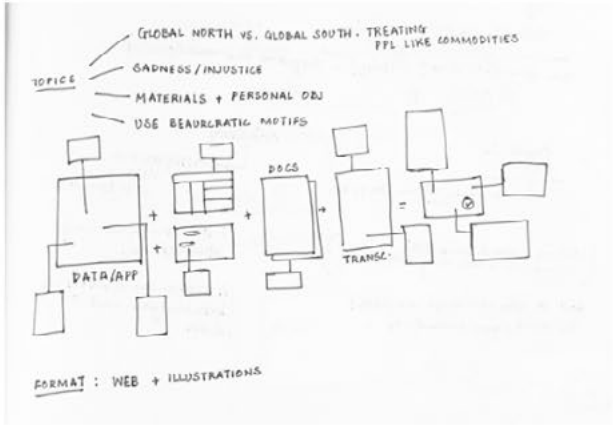
A lot of what I wanted to express was the injustice of being dehumanised by bureaucratic and immigration systems - **especially in the treatment of the Global North / 'First' World when it brings in people from the Global South, so I decided to merge the materials with the personal and create an interface allows to expand that diminished identity - almost a mix of all three experiments.**

3.5 Experiment 3: **A filled Visa Application with annotations on the personal burdens while going through the process -** while recaptioning the documents with the subtext they carry (see: Passport and Degree)

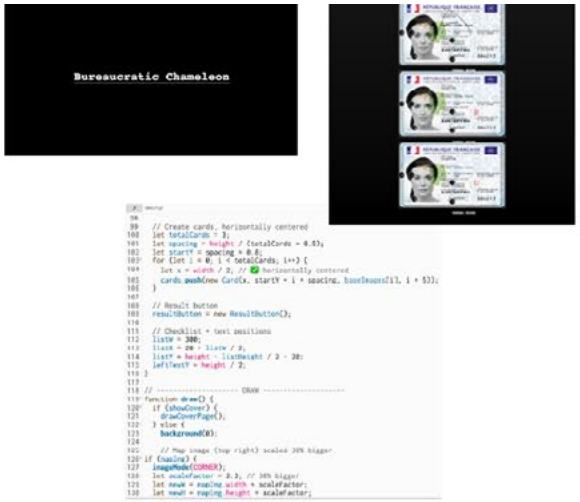
Process

Government websites often are notoriously glitchy, and almost obsolete in the way they are designed. But a lot of the process also depends on the slow, info-heavy websites - I wanted to replicate the jankiness of the interactions, so I used AI to help me write a rudimentary code for my interactive document to create 3 cards laid together. **The interactions would then open handpainted illustration popups of the many things that constitutes life for them within that time (arguably one of the most "human" way of expression).**

For my critical question, I wanted to make the process of this translation interactive by retaining the bureaucratic look that often diminishes identity to statics, which could acheived well through a simplistic website that holds a lot personal and rich information, but only reveals it when triggered.

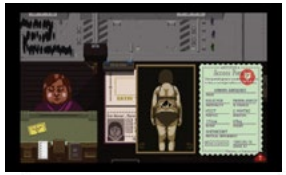


3.6. (Top) The original layout plan for the website, with documents laid one beside the other, each of which would expand in pop-ups when clicked.



3.6. (Top) The best way to express humanity in this nearly robotic process of coding the interface was illustration

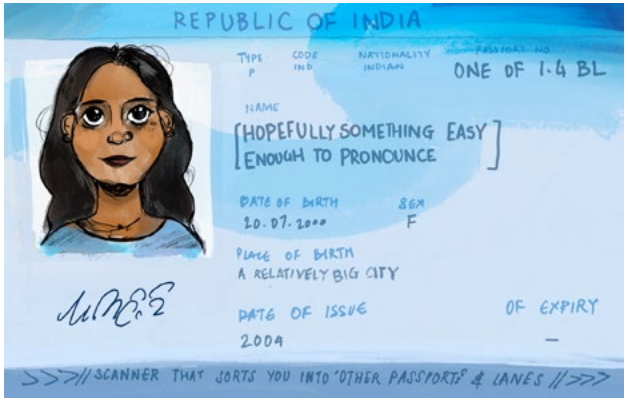
One of my references was this brilliant game recommended by one of my groupmates, called **Papers, Please**. It is a puzzle simulation video game created by indie game developer Lucas Pope. The game was set in the Dystopian Arstotzka and the player is the immigration inspector controlling the flow of people entering the country. **The aesthetics and tone of the game rouses empathy by demonstrating the cruel act of immobilising the flow of people in a war-ridden nation- it helped me place my juxtaposition of bureaucracy versus humanity**.



Papers, Please (2013). PC [Game]: 3909 LLC.

Development

After the basis of the interface was ready, a interaction of clicking into ID cards to reveal a pop-up that expands on the identity of the character**, I created illustrations for the - more handdrawn, colourful and sketchy, with a sense of motion and imperfection within them so they stand against the frigidity of the backdrop well.** .



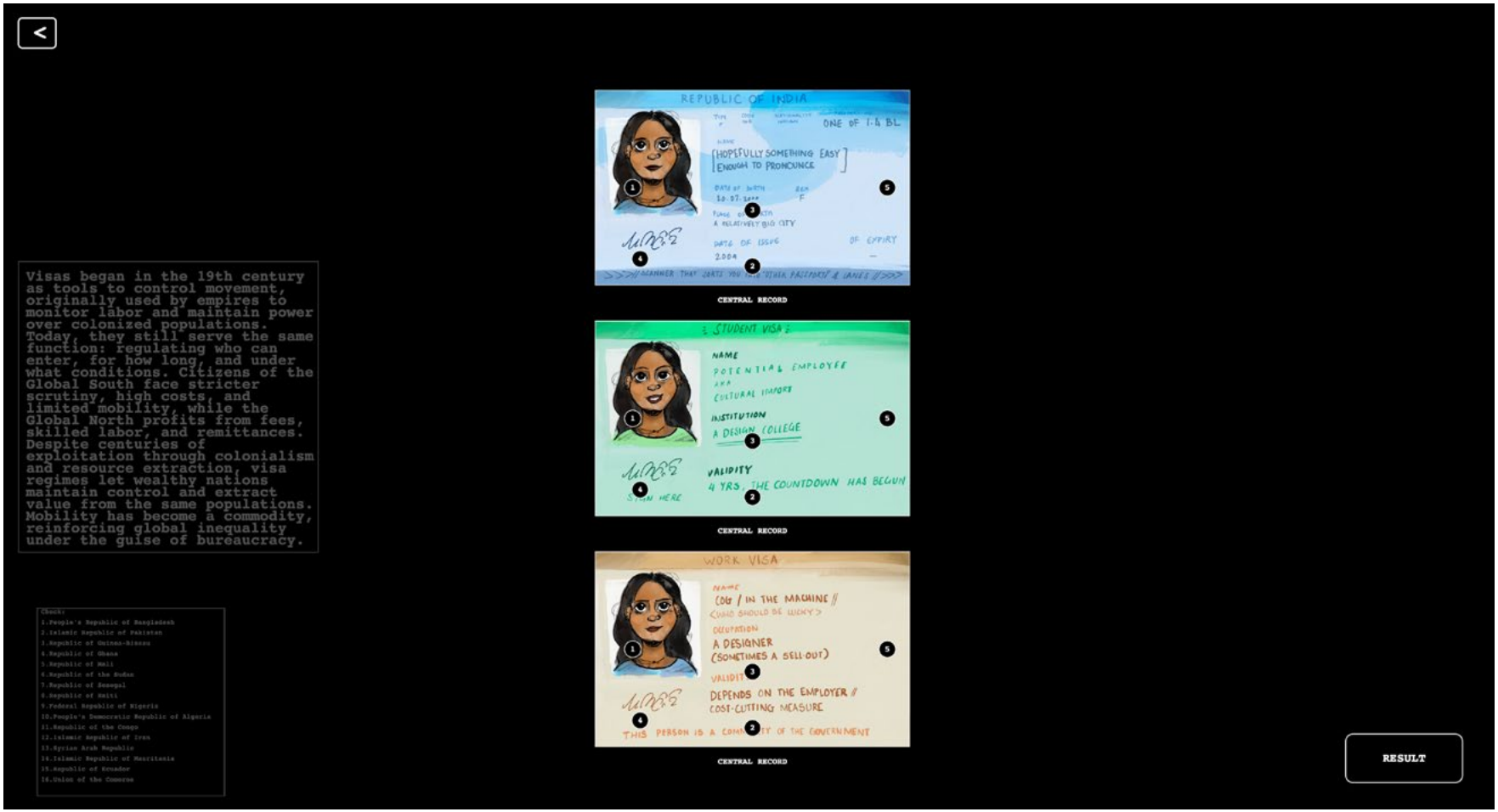
3.7. The base ID card each show a phase in the life of the "immigrant" and the supporting images ellaborate on their lives.

I started annotating the cards with **recurring thoughts that define 'identity' for an immigrant or expat**, which is often marked with urgency and an expiry date, over anything else.

Development

3.8. Some pop-up illustrations that explore the identity of the character, and small details about thier experience as an immigrant. Eg. ID photos that document 'growing up' or small well-meaning compliments undermining the context within which post-colonial populations have evolved.

Showcase



3.9. The cover page leads us into the layout of 3 cards with numbers around them - **and clicking into the numbers explodes the page into several pop-ups.** *The identity cards expand into multitudes of aspects, all a different phase, a new shape, created by the experiences that are condensed within the control of a single document.*

[See video recording here.](#)

Showcase

[See video recording](#)

[here.](#)

3.10. The clicking interaction creates a mechanical sound: a print, a process of bureaucracy being expanded. **At the bottom right corner, a 'result' button sits, which if pressed randomly creates an Approved/Denied message - quite similar to how random the process is for most people who never know on what ground their visas applications were given the result it were - so the anxiety loop continues.**

End notes

On this topic:

Through this project, I was able to carry out an enquiry regarding the geopolitical realities of mobility for residents from the Global South and the ease of access bias possessed and protected by parts of the Global North. **Using illustration and art revives the humanity that is disregrded in the broad census and categorisation of nations, and brings back empathy in these discussions.**

However, the topic is wider and deeper than this enquiry, and while reading the impact is one way to respond to the topic, there still remains a power gap between the privleged few travelling with some means (as the ones illustrated here) versus those who migrate to survive. This enquiry acknowledges that and I hope there would be more opportunity for me in the future to expand on the nuances of immigration and challenge the colonial bias such as this through my work.

On Future Development:

To further develop this project, I am interested in cleaning up the scope of this enquiry to focus more deeply on the discussions around the impact of border and privilege hierarchies in geopolitical realities of the Global South through subtext.

On a technical level, I would like to push the project to be clearer and easier to navigate while maintaining its sense of “explosion”.

04 Methods of Iterating

Creative Code as Learning a Language

Getting Started / Iteration 01

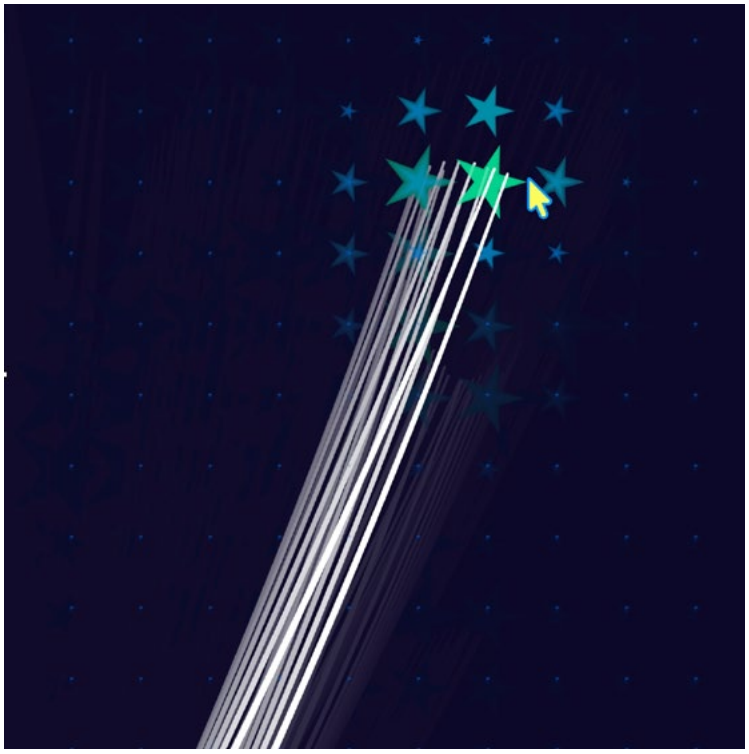
I chose For this assignment, I chose to replicate Alida Sun's artwork made through the medium C++ and AV synesthesia (alidasun, 2025) to try my hand at creative coding. Sun's work aligns creative coding with resistance against big tech. Her "distortion" and "low-poly" aesthetics function as a form of refusal of smoothness and efficiency, and instead favours expressive friction.

alidasun (2025)

While I didn't have full information how this piece was constructed - I decided to keep two things in my process: an interaction that triggers the 'star' response and using, frankly, curiosity and play to figure out this process (as the artist aptly advises).

Using YouTube tutorials and AI supported input, I first coded in a mouse-responsive version of this iteration, where the 'arm' moves when dragged with the mouse and creates stars.

Coming with very little background in code, this process was challenging as it felt like working - quite literally - in a different language.



4.1. First stab at coding with interaction

alidasun (2025) 'Curiosity + play = the most powerful forms of research' [Instagram] 01/12. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/DRua5lOiGIR/ (Accessed: Mar 2).

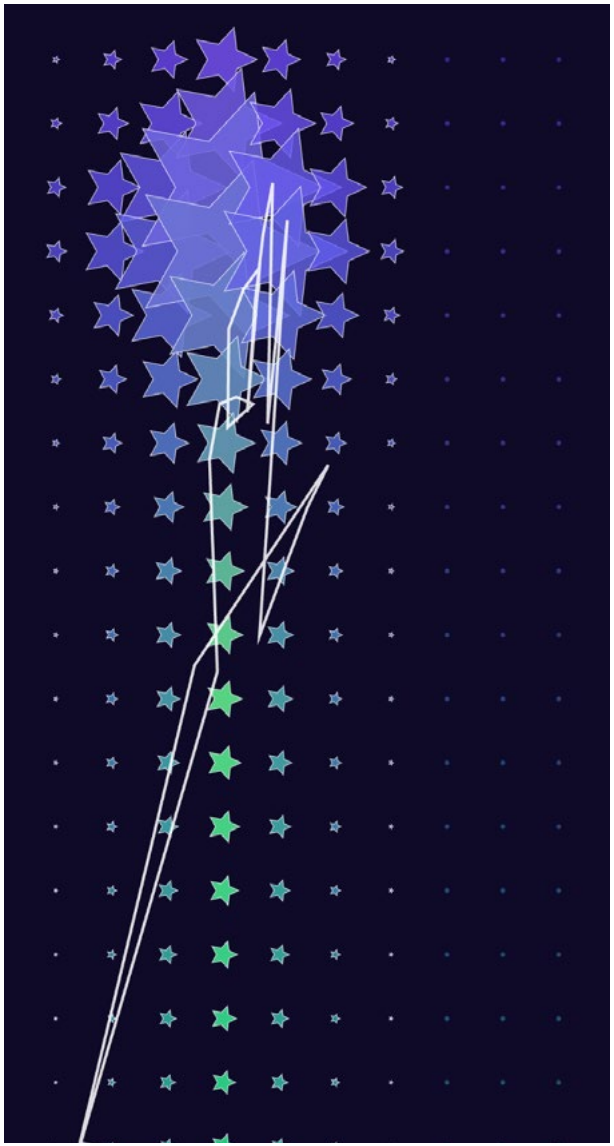
Iteration 01 - Replication

My point of entry into creative coding was grounded in a rudimentary understanding of HTML. I began working with P5.js through YouTube Tutorials, copying programs with limited comprehension of how they functioned as a whole. **A phase of "mimicry" became my first mode of learning.** While it produced visual outputs, the process felt disingenuous, exposing a disconnect between outcome and understanding.

I used a lot of resources from the college, especially talking to technicians who can support with coding projects and my learning journey started there.

This discomfort of not understanding my process in this first iteration led me to reconsider coding as a linguistic system than purely technical one. When technicians in the Physical Computing Lab described my code as "mine" and not something that can be reverse-engineered, **I realized I was in an early stage of language learning (similar to, say, babbling), piecing together grammatical structures without full fluency. With the support of technicians and AI, I produced a first initiation of the reference, accepting partial comprehension and error as intrinsic to learning.**

See full sketch here

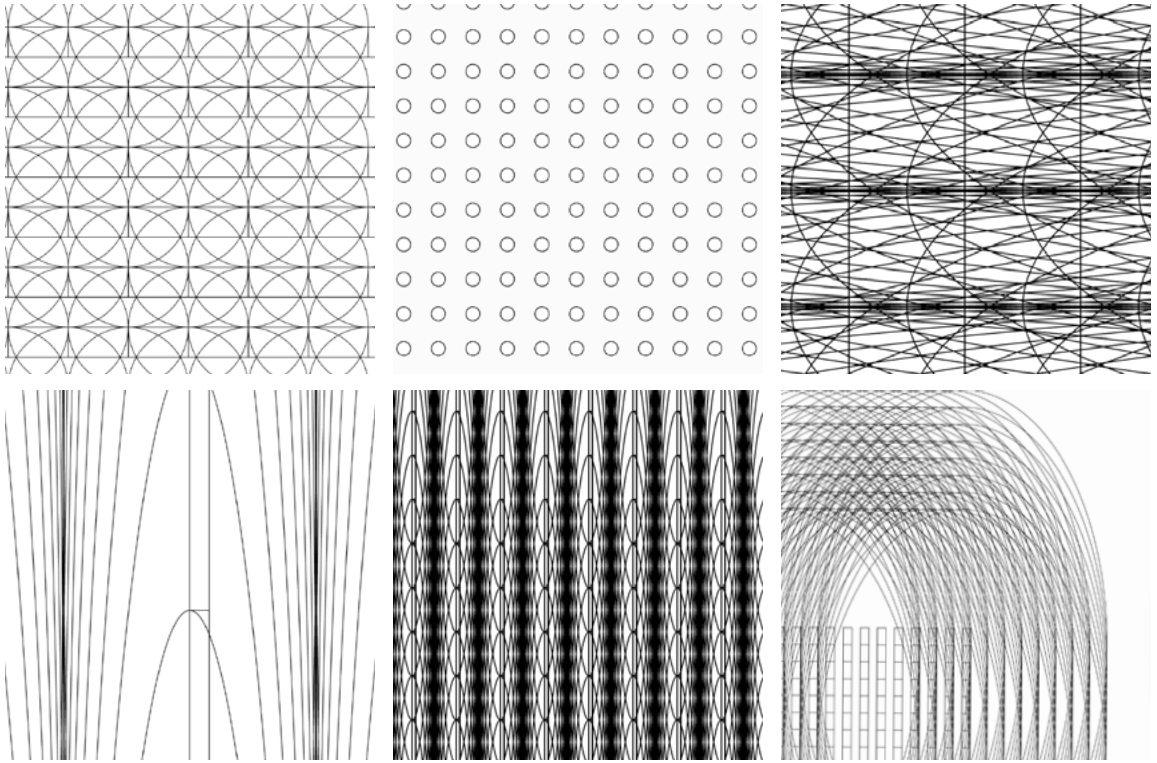


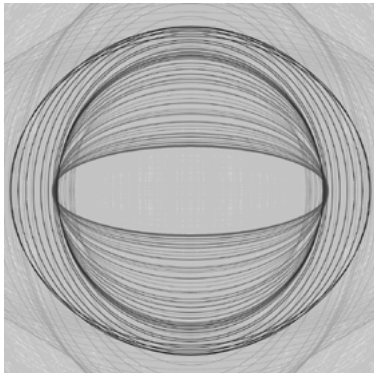
4.2. An improved version of the first iteration, closer in resemblance

Sketching with Code

In the following week after creating the first iteration, I came back to coding with a pencil and paper (literally and metaphorically). In subsequent iterations, my process shifted from imitation to play - and began seeing this process more clearly like learning to speak a new tongue. Working collaboratively with the technicians, I started to change parameters (say, colour, length, sound, text) to develop my language "fluency" through interaction than linear instruction. "Syntax" equated sentence structure, "functions" acted as verbs and "variables" became, a form of collective nouns. Fluency emerged increased "literacy" of the language.

At this point, coding went from imitation to more playful approach, with the comfort of taking risks with tool and waiting for something new to happen.

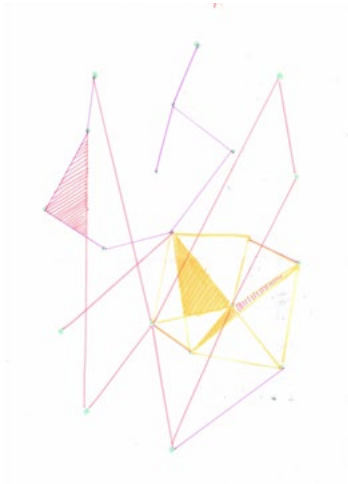


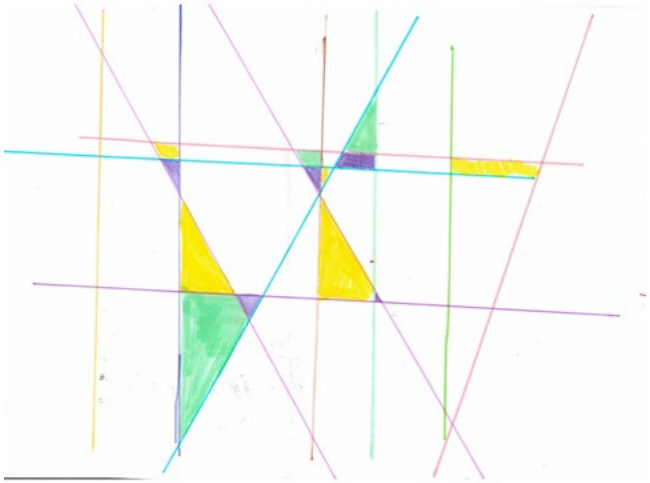


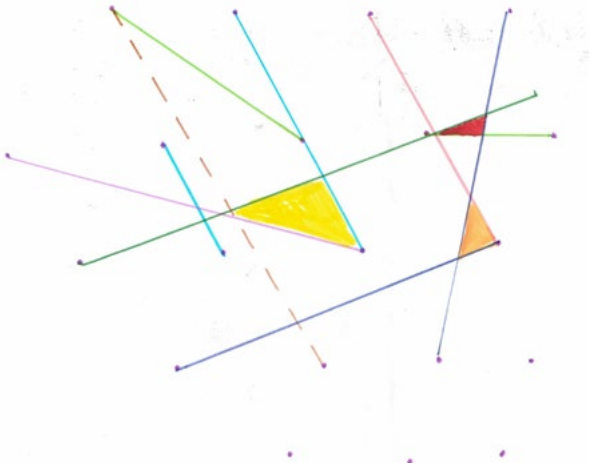
4.3 Pattern generation with code felt like learning words - learning to connect two moving parts and forming something almost tangible - and also, having it appear after the connection has been made

(Outputs made from code that can always be a little unexpected)

Computational Design



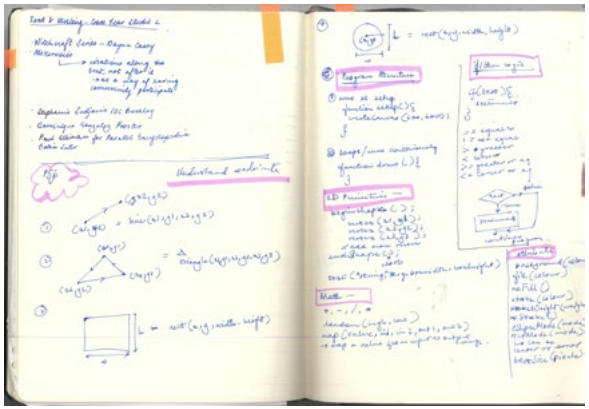


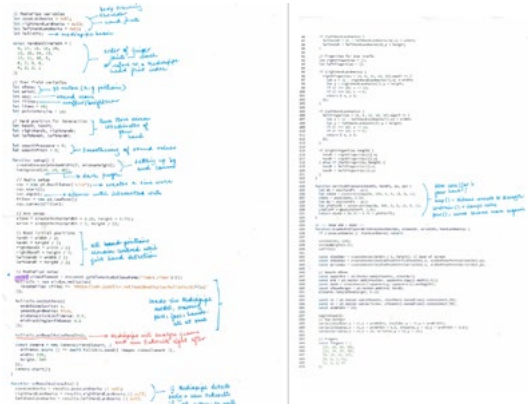


Code was tech-heavy, and also all the aesthetics and practices that surrounded it seemed to keep technology at the center of it. (A small story: my mum was a coder in the 90s, but she said she loved to write it down on paper first, then bring it into the computer) - and I tried to adopt this analog approach in my learning process.

I attended a workshop on computational design that helped me break down not just the backend but also the frontend part of the code on paper, and suddenly I collaborate with code in its creation, not just through backend input.

A subversion of conventional coding by reimaganing the digital onto paper and refreshing the structure of computational design.





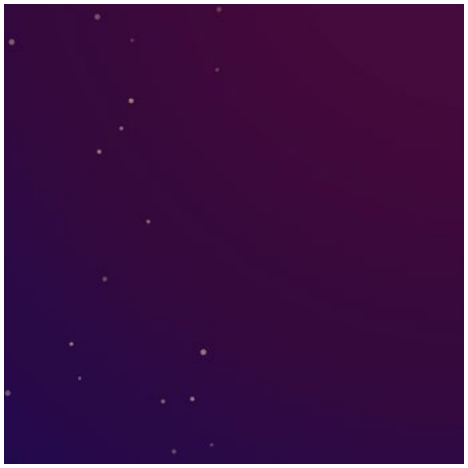
Iterations

Play was becoming an important part of my process as I kept **interactions central to my digital iterations.** These interactions were charted by the handpose model that detected hands through the systems webcam.

Interactions triggered the code. Drawing on Donna Haraway's Situated Knowledges, the code requires literal physical participation to activate the code, disrupting tech's uber-smooth behaviour with friction. The impersonal form of tech now becomes relational and embodied, reconciling with Alida Sun's philosophy in coding on C++.

While AI was used a support tool, I still kept most of my learning embedded within a community of exchange. **Conversations with technicians, peers and even family members formed a feedback loop that shaped my understanding of code as tool. This helped fluency to emerge through shared engagement instead of in isolation.**

Haraway, D., 1988. Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), pp.575–599. doi:10.2307/3178066.



Interaction triggers text:

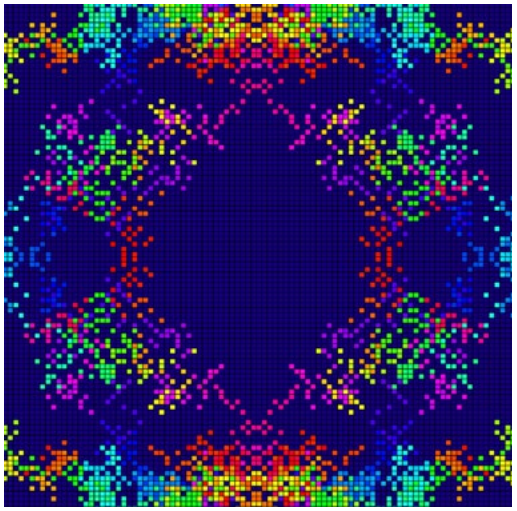
See full sketch

Interaction triggers ellipses:

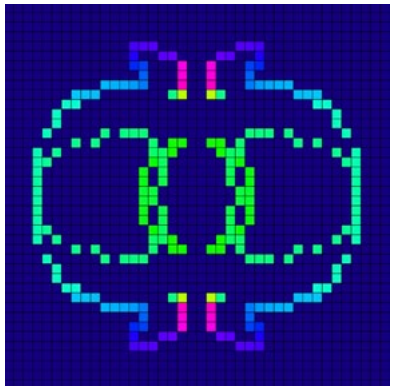
See full sketch

Kaleidoscopic Iterations

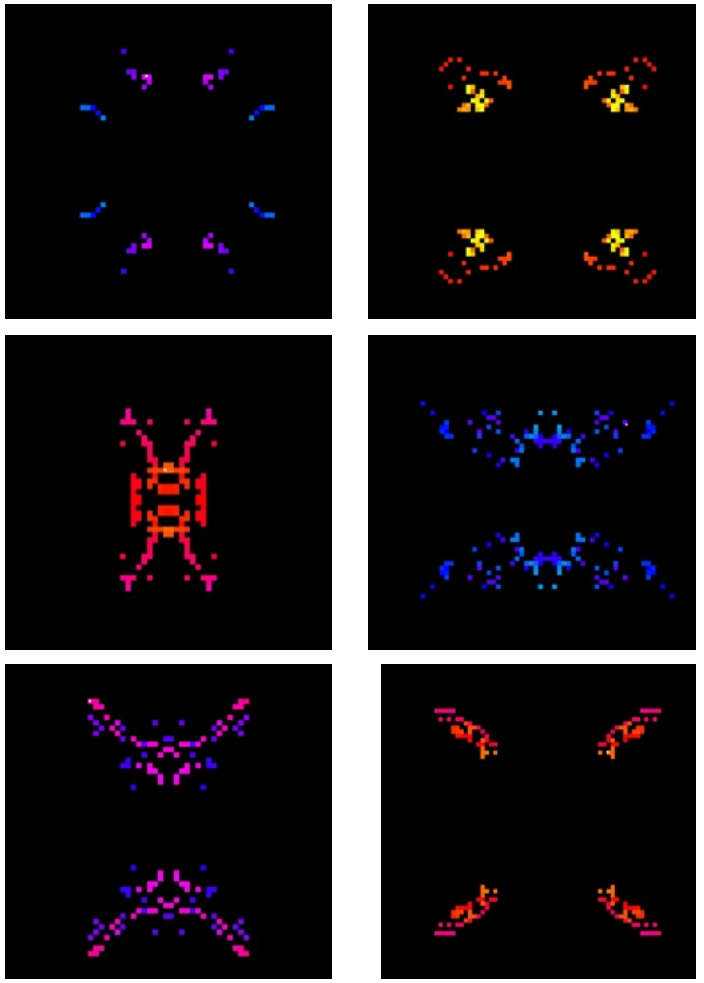
In my last round of iterations, I continued on the 'play' aspect of my process and created several patterns and ornamental interactive pieces that incrementally helped gain mastery over the tool and also come up with ways it could be subverted.



(Top) A Self Generating Kaleidoscope



(Top) Kaleidoscopic symmetry created with mouse interaction

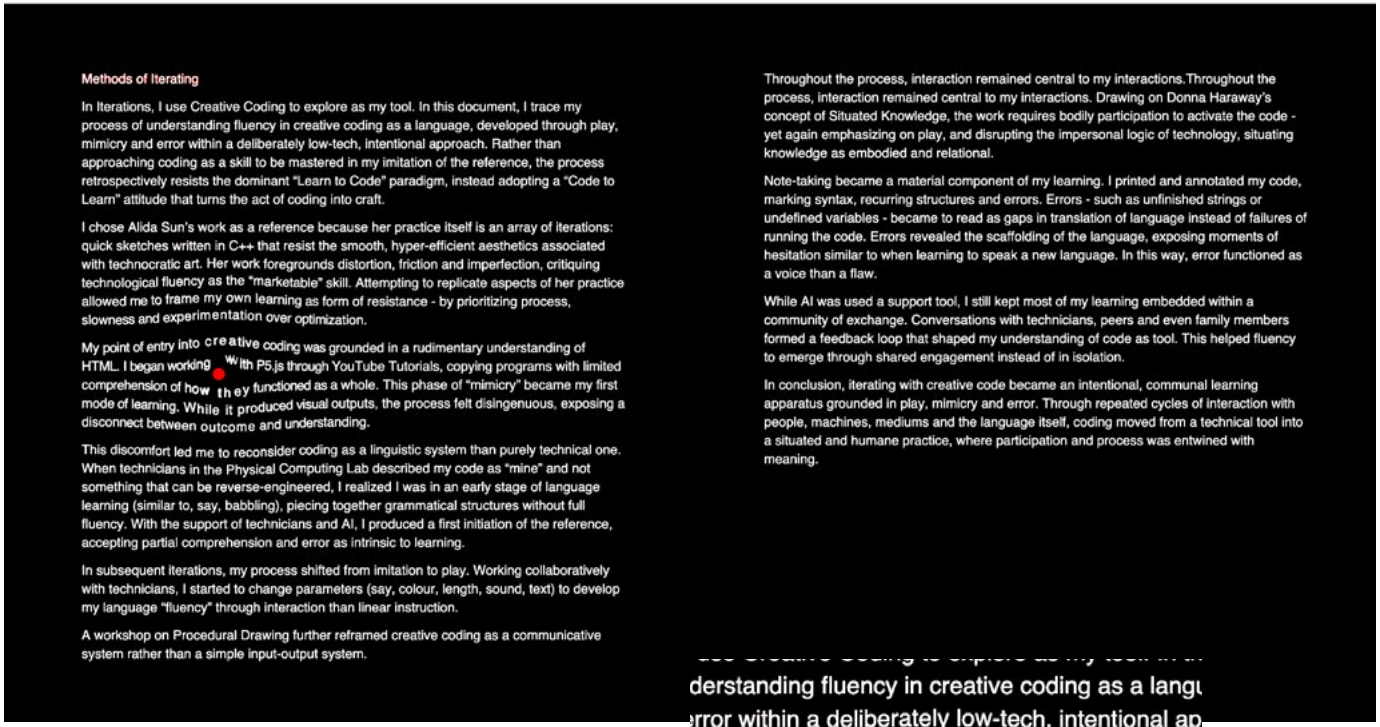


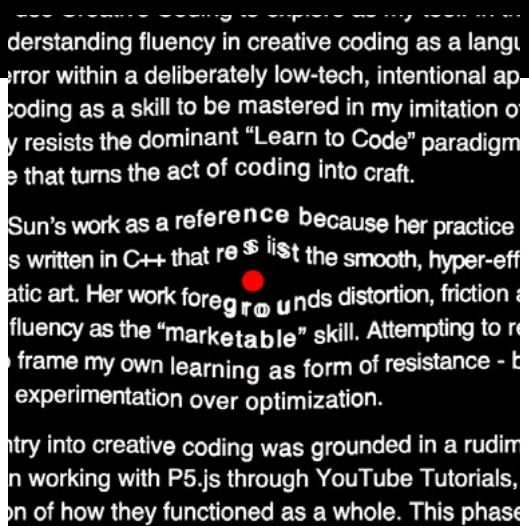
Multiple outputs reflected with different interaction patterns

See full sketch here

Writing Response

In conclusion, iterating with creative code became an intentional, communal learning apparatus grounded in play, mimicry and error. Through repeated cycles of interaction with people, machines, mediums and the language itself, coding moved from a technical tool into a situated and humane practice, where participation and process was entwined with meaning.

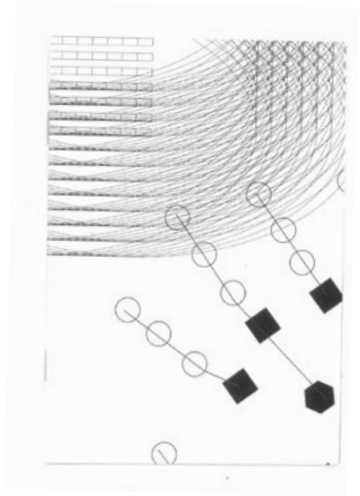


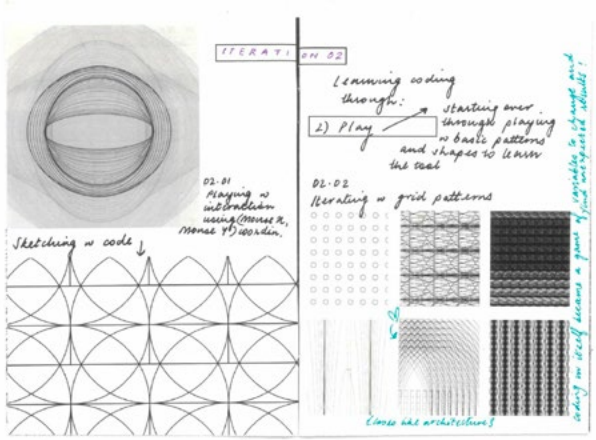


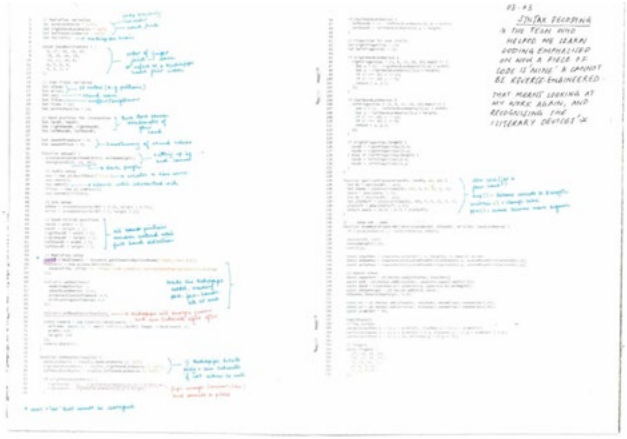
The reference I began with had interaction with code, and then text overlaid onto it.

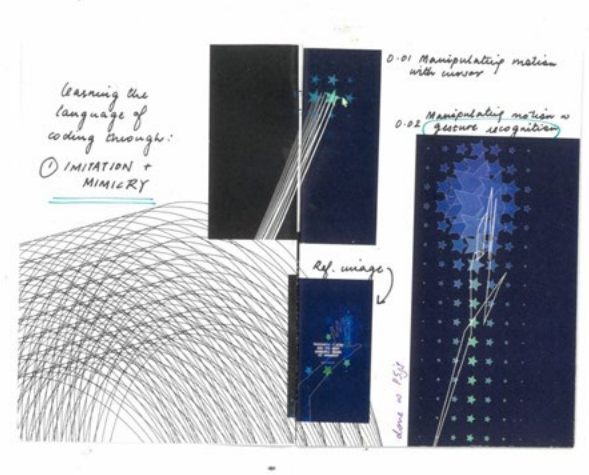
In my final iteration, I feel I have progressed well as using the principles of the reference, the text also now becomes part of the interaction and the embodiement of play.

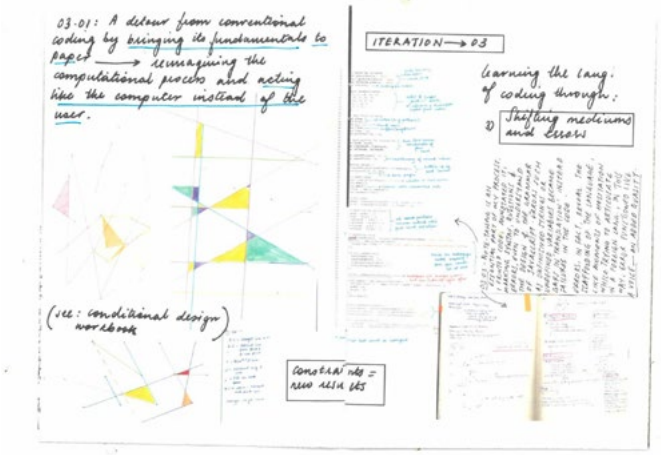
See Final Sketch here (open full screen please).

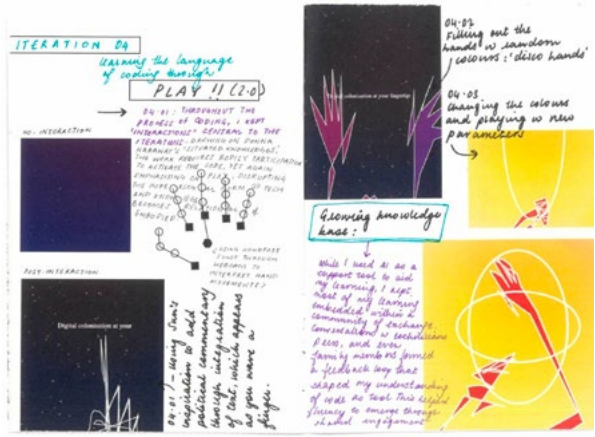






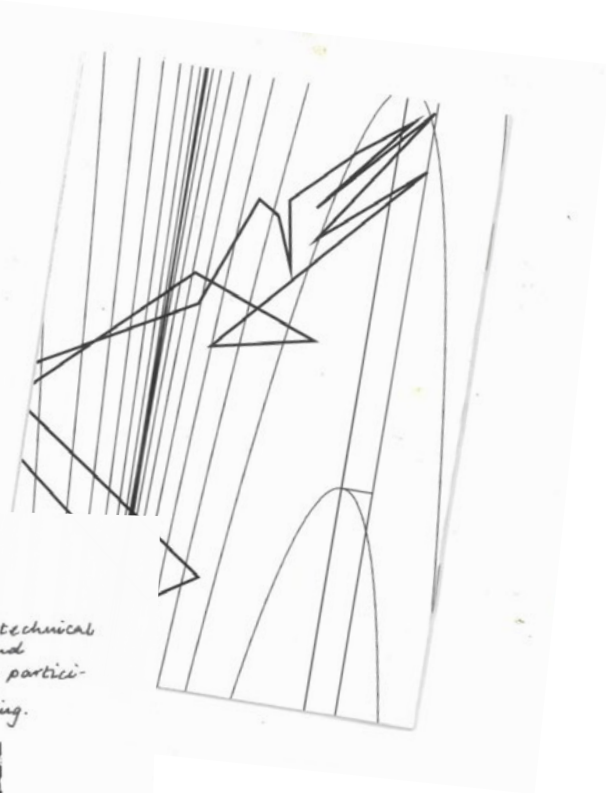


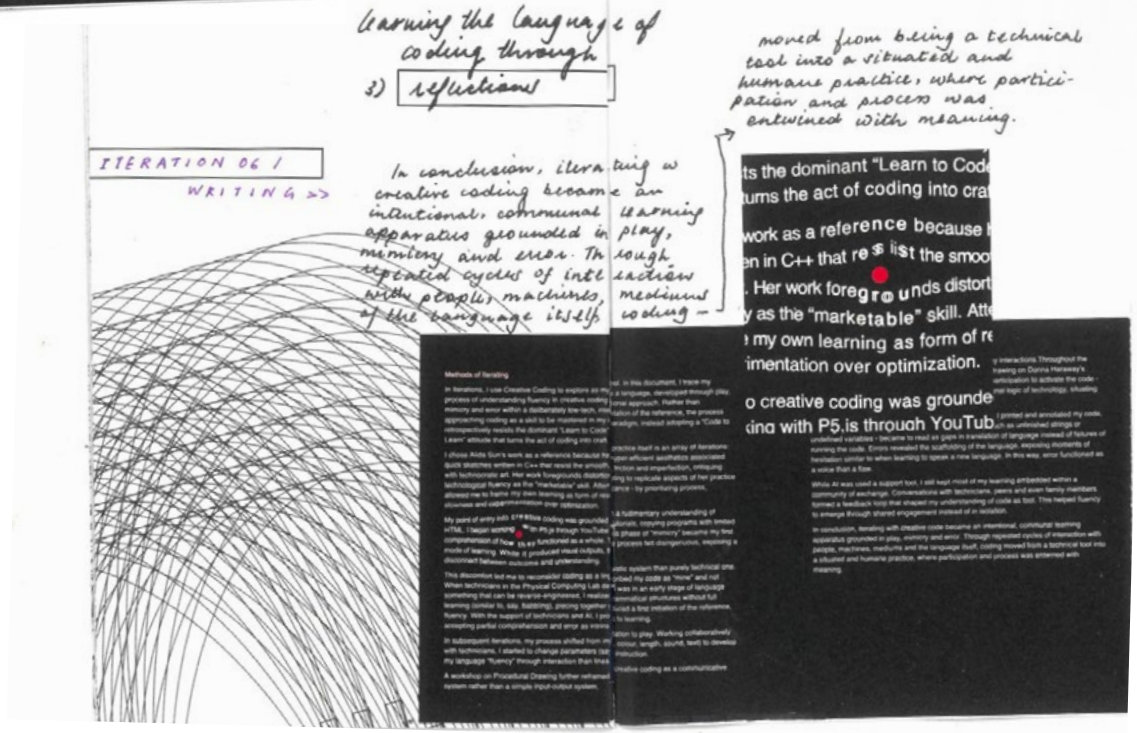




Lastly, as notetaking and writing was a significant part of my process, I also created a small log of my iterations and annotated around it. This creates a more personal relationship with my process of learning this language, and feels like a step towards a longer journey of evolving my practice with code.

mouse-operated kaleidoscope
ITERATION - 05
learning the language of coding through
2) Play 1 (3.0)
Trying out new patterns built a new familiarity w the language




learning the language of coding through
3) reflections
ITERATION 06 /
WRITING >>
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o creative coding was grounde
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05 Methods of Contextualising

Who can Afford to be Sustainable?
And at What Cost? - A Speculative Study

Lexi James - Sasha Sam - Uma Bhojraj
- Gracie Thornham

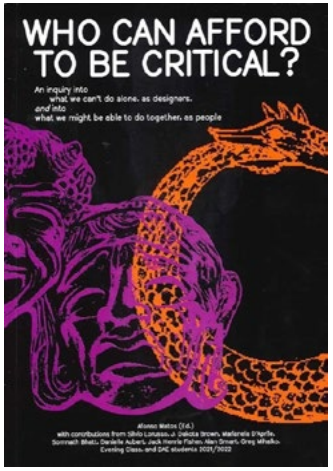
Explorations On Affordability

As a group, we started a common interest in affordability in our topic of Space and Scale. Coming from diverse backgrounds both geographically and professionally, we found common ground in discussing **what power structures enable and obstruct access to climate justice on an individual, institutional and global level.**

Early on in our discussion, we referred to 'Who Can Afford to be Critical?' by Alfonso Matos, which framed our **understanding of affordability to include time, labour, access, and most strikingly, structural privilege.** This became a hinge concept that guided our

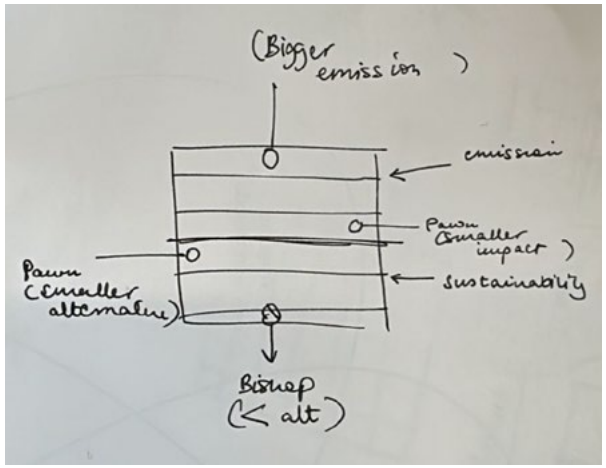
Our first step exploration was, **the game of chess as one of the strongest ways to demonstrate power structures (space) and affordability of movement (scale)- as there is a hierarchy inherent in the game of chess its various pieces.**

We wanted to define different 'players' in the larger ecosystem of sustainability and place their impact as a point of enquiry.



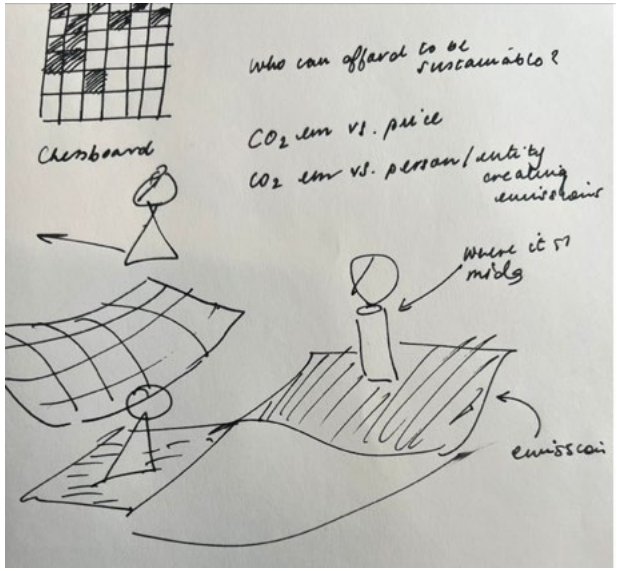
Matos, A. (2022) Who can afford to be critical?: An Inquiry Into What We Can't Do Alone, as Designers, and Into What We Might Be Able to Do Together, as People. Eindhoven: Set Margins'.

After Oil (Strait of Hormuz Grand Chessboard) Design Earth (2016). Geostories. [Drawing] Available at: https://cooper.edu/architecture/events-and-exhibitions/exhibitions/geostories-another-architecture-environment.



5.1. (From top to bottom) Early sketch explorations of a chessboard: with bigger pieces like 'king' and 'queen' being bigger in emissions *and smaller pieces like the pawn being 'more sustainable'.*

Bottom: We also considered a warped chessboard *to represent an uneven playing field while navigating power structures as an 'individual' or smaller piece.*

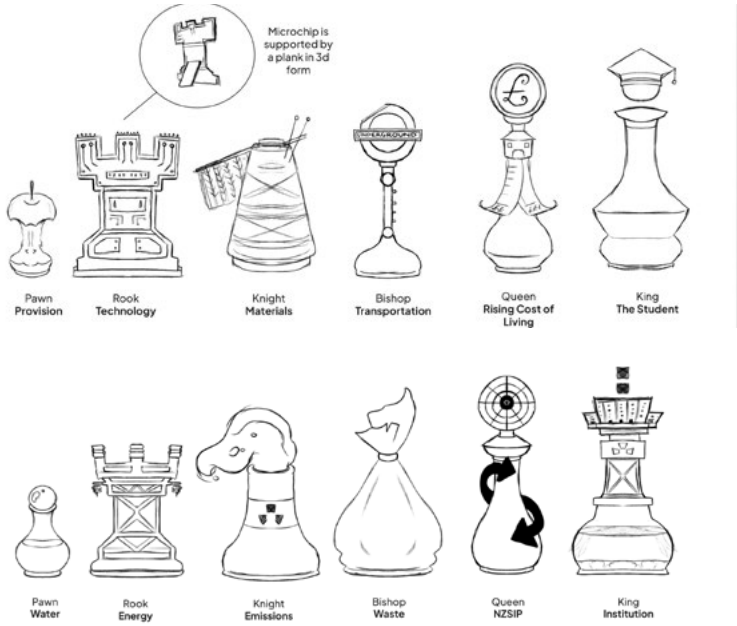


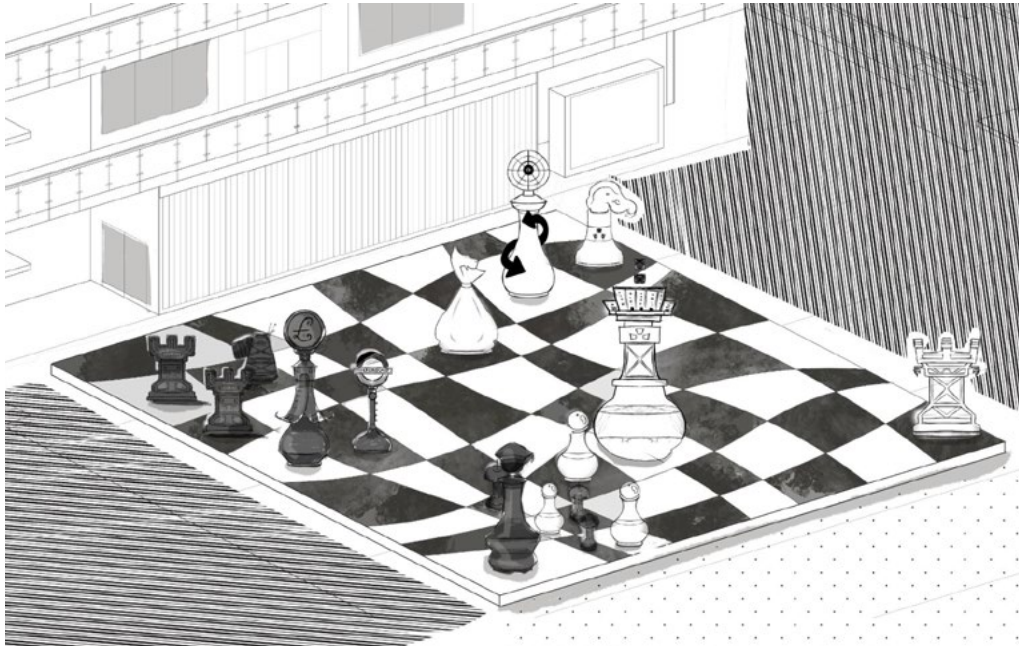
Explorations of ‘Chessboard’

For our first week presentation, we drafted up a visualisation of the **relationships of the institution and the student on a chessboard with all of the pieces corresponding to different factors that affect both NSZIP goals and the affordability of the student to help acheive them.**

We initially planned to **develop these into series of different ‘strategies’ that each bring forth to light the state of different factors** on varying scales, in this macro view.

5.2. Character design by Uma B. We represented two sides of the chessboard - the institution and the student, with all of the pieces representing a key factor in their relationship with the NET Zero Plan / sustainability as a whole.





5.3. Draft illustration by Gracie Thornham and Uma B.. This illustration was one ‘positioning’ where the student ‘king’ is cornered by institutional pieces into a sustainable lifestyle the student can ill-afford.

Need for Pivot:

After our feedback, a general consensus was reached that the logic of the chessboard was not fully working, with the complexity of the enquiry flattening out in the execution, considering there were too many data points to work with. At this point, we decided to pivot our approach to look at more ways of exploring Space and Scale.

Rescoping the Project

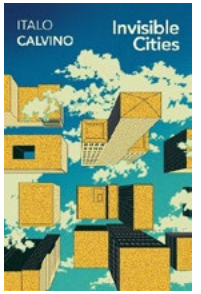
Across the second week, we dived into reorienting our project to work more cohesive and **focussed in on the UAL NZSIP Waste Dataset** to focus our enquiry of affordability in one direction. While we moved away from the Chess idea, **we still retained the 'world-building' aspect of it to frame our discussion.**

While still wanting to explore the original enquiry of systems that have disproportionate ecological reverberations through different planes and scales, we were confronted by **the irony of graphic design frequently reinforcing these accelerated capitalist systems through excess advertising and materiality. The question, then, was how to subvert that role as a designer. It was Speculative Design that allowed us to challenge the present by projecting futures through (in our case, illustrative) storytelling that expose the consequences of our current trajectory.** Within this storytelling system, affordability could be transposed in economic, ecological, ethical forms.

We made a list of **speculative futures** we would like to explore among which we chose four, one for each member of the group. While remaining tied to the group, **the intent was the every 'world' would be an iteration that goes deep into its scenario to see how the enquiry of affordability in the use of waste play out.**

Invisible Cities is a literary example of world-building. Calvino uses a complex index system to thematically categorise together sets of speculative cities.

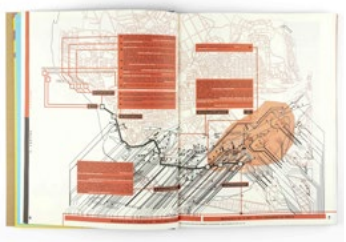
Calvino's fragmented descriptions of imagined cities provided a structural model for our speculative waste futures. **Rather than predicting a single outcome, Invisible Cities presents multiple realities that reflect different social logics.**



Calvino, I. (1972). *Invisible Cities*. London Vintage

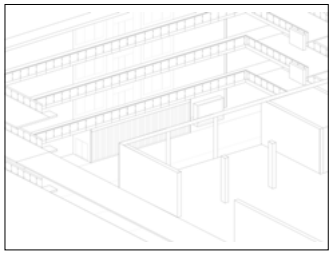
An Atlas of Agendas serves as a **visualisation of a network of dependencies.** The reference uses "visualizations of interests and relations that re-articulate the dominant symbolic order and actualize existing structures that otherwise remain concealed and unknown." (Holmes, 2013)

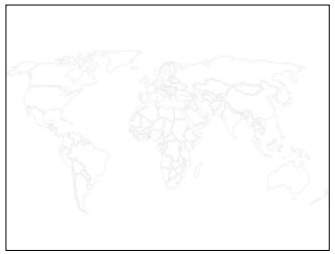
This helped us create **a visual framework of how we want to present these complex systems.**



Holmes, B., Freek Lomme and Bureau (2013). *An Atlas of Agendas*.

Zooming as a Critical Tool





(Really faint - zoom in!)

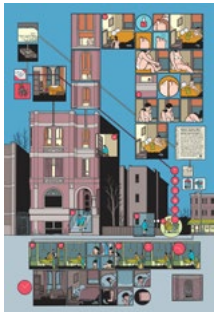
We were scaling our our speculative world across three modalities: CSM (the institution), the city of London, and a Global Approach. Gracie T. provided the base sketches for these three modes, upon which we developed our changes.

We used the effect of 'unfolding techniques' to represent the magnitude of scale in our pieces. **Through this mechanism, zooming became a critical tool that situate the 'scale' aspect of the project.**

5.4. Prototyping by Gracie T. and Uma B..

Building Worlds and Relationships

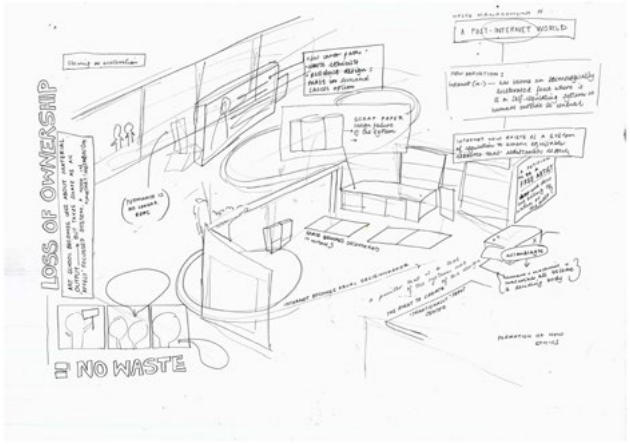
MacCormack, P. (2015). Cosmogenic Acceleration: Futurity and Ethics. In: J. Aranda, B.K. Wood and A. Vidokle, eds., *The Internet Does Not Exist*. Berlin: Sternberg Press, pp.299–313.

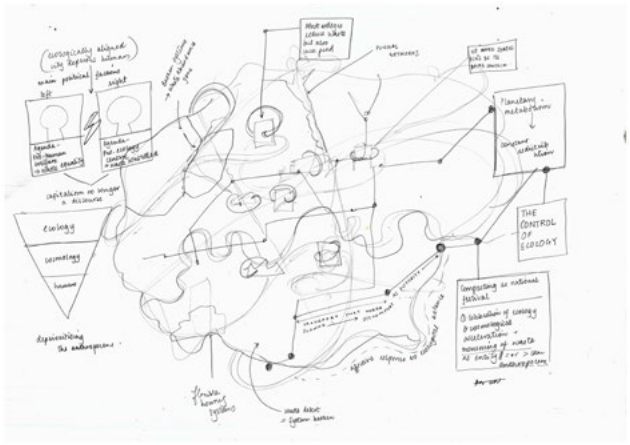


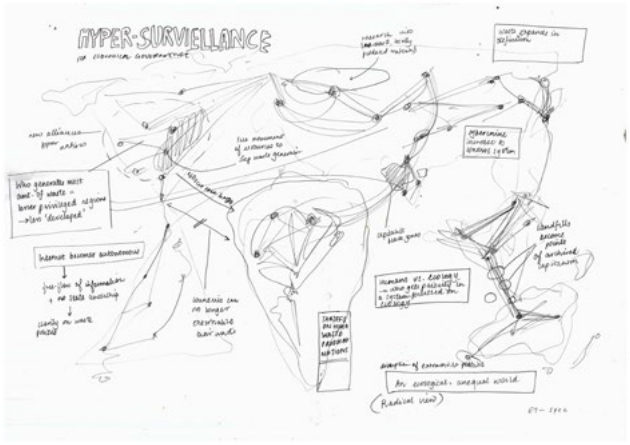
Ware, C. (2012). *Building stories*. London: Jonathan Cape.

I chose to work with a 'Post-Internet' scenario, working off MacCormack's essay on Cosmogenic Acceleration. For me, understanding Cosmogenic Acceleration is preceeded by elaborating on 'Acceleration' - and 'Accelerated' aesthetics, ones that create a sense of speed and future, consume the 'present' in lieu of what tomorrow might look like, create a broken sense of progress without considering its ramifications. Graphic design is complicit, in the mainstream, to create hypertechnological images of a near future, and I wanted to envision a different future, even in a 'post-internet' world. **Cosmogenic Ethics prioritise the ecology, a much-larger scale that supercedes not only space, but also inevitably, time. In this world, humans are deprioritised - perhaps one of the most contentious notions within its approach. Is the anthropocene even capable of envisioning a real future where they are not relevant?** What would be the point of reference in that scale? I was excited to explore these ideas in my work, stemming from the concept of the texts.

Visually, I used the structure based of the architectural sketches Gracie had created for the group, and stylistically modified it to look colourful, and comic-like, but with an emotional density, inspired by the works of Chris Ware. **The piece is intended to speak to an introspective audience that exists within the intersection of criticism and visual literature.**



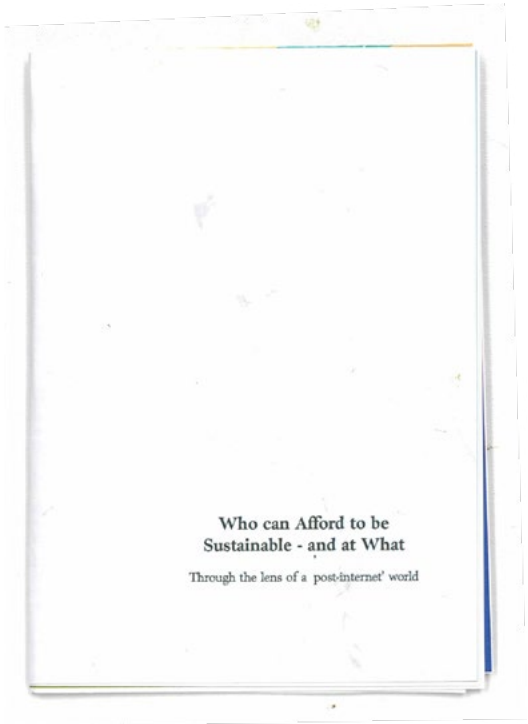


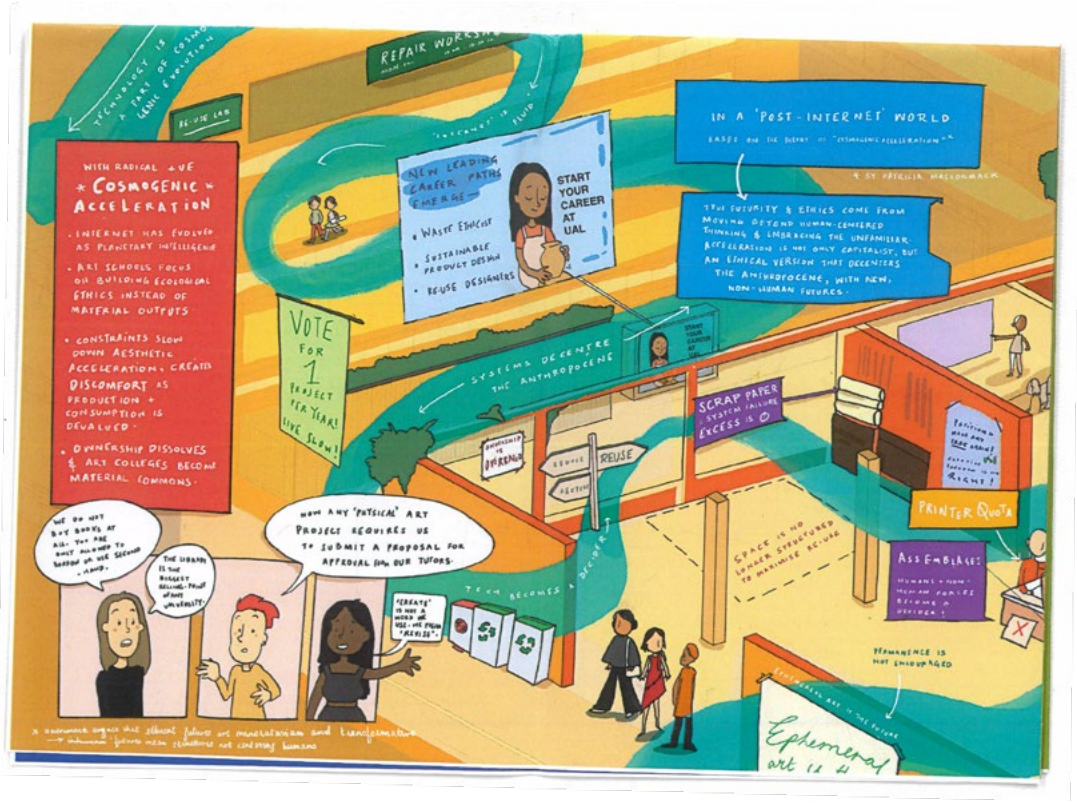


5.6. (Top) Sketch explorations the CSM mode of the piece: the art institution, in this world, takes on the role of imparting ethics as education as opposed to material output. Production is slowed.

(Middle) In this world, waste begins to stratify class. However, the ethics demand that those who 'generate' more waste occupy more disadvantaged parts of the system.

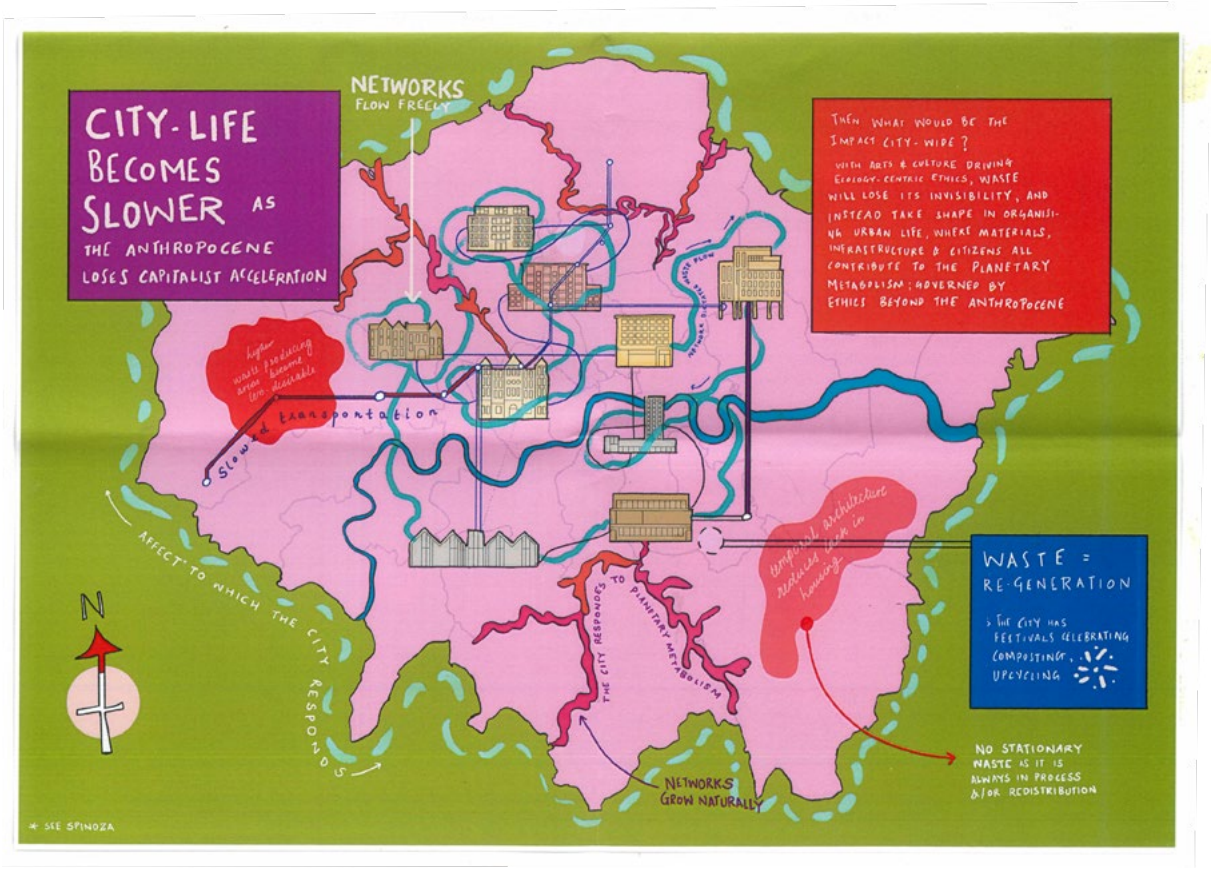
(Bottom) On a global level, externalising of waste is restricted. However, it is not a utopia. In this world, the anthropocene bears the cost of being sustainable.





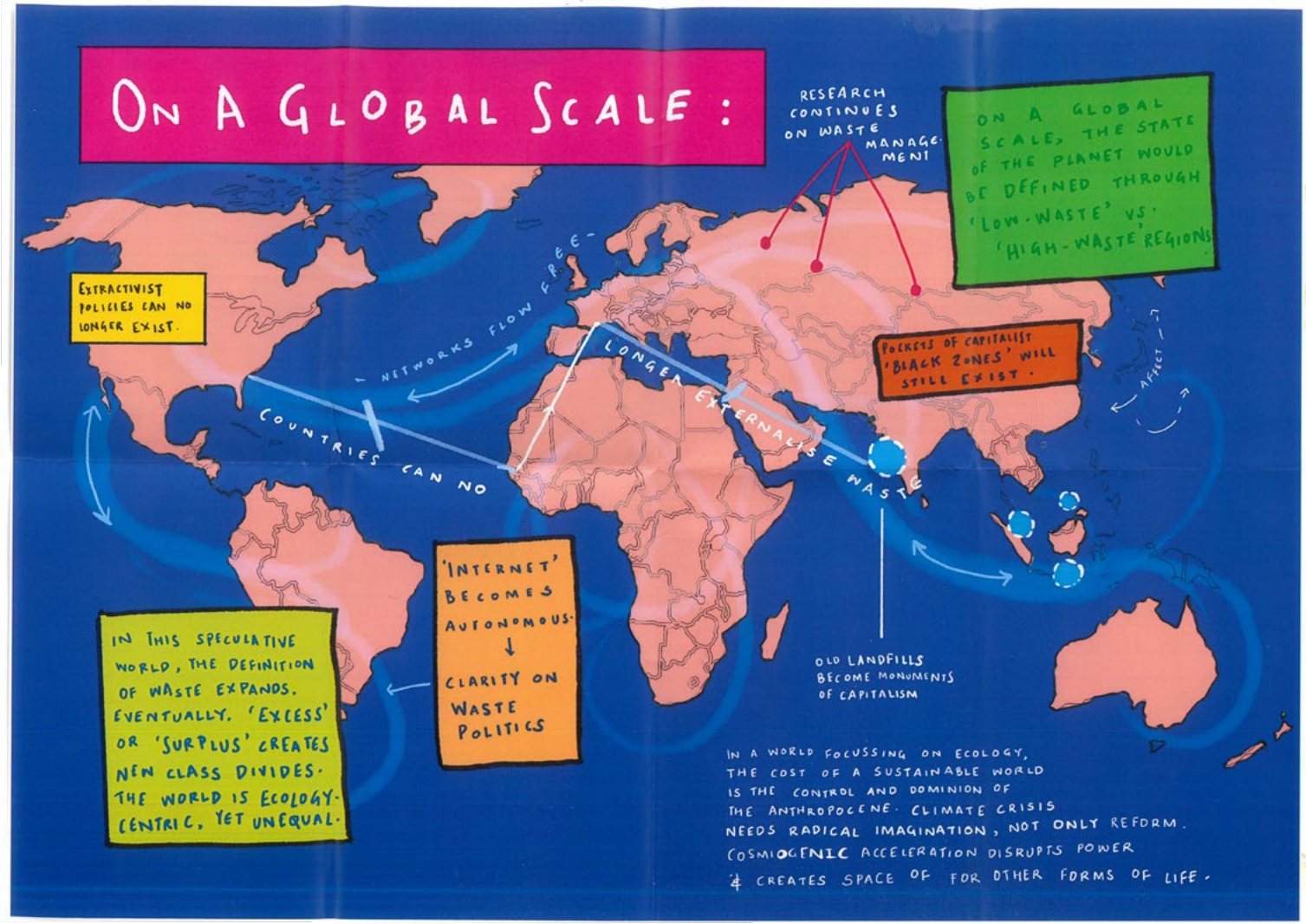
5.7. (Left) Cover page (please excuse the typo!) .

(Right) CSM Scale of the piece: "Ownership Dissolves and Art Colleges become Material Commons"



5.8. City (London) Scale : Waste loses its invisibility in this world, as it in fact becomes the driving force in urban planning and waste - related networks take organic shape. It predicts that waste then is never found stationery as it is always in process as some stage.

Waste also becomes a cultural moment - festivals surround the idea of composting and reusing, as cosmogenic 'regeneration'!



*5.9. A global scale: "***In a world focussing on ecology, the cost of a sustainable world is the control and dominion of the anthropocene. Climate crisis needs radical imagination, not only reform. Cosmogenic Acceleration disrupt prevailing power structures and create space for other forms of life and living.***"**

5.10. The enquiry of 'Who can Afford to be Sustainable' is tied together with different scenarios coming together, each looking at different ways of tackling the idea within its own world.

One of them looks at the Green Party coming to power, another looks at what happens if Wars didn't exist, and the last if Landfills didn't exist. They draw from extended research on the data on waste flow when it leaves the UAL jurisdiction.

In Conclusion

On Group Work:

At a group level, sustaining depth around affordability proved challenging. As with many collaborative processes, certain voices occasionally dominated, complicating cohesion. Time constraints further limited the integration of our speculative worlds into a unified argument. Yet there is value in this friction. **The project functioned as a workshop of perspectives, testing how graphic design might envision and communicate futures** that reshape how we operate within systems of waste and consumption, from the scale of a single coffee cup to a landfill on the other side of the world.

On Graphic Design fostering a conversation about climate justice:

The updated concept took shape within a single week, but I genuinely think it led me to think more deeply about the role of graphic and communcation design in envisioning and critically engaging with the discourse of waste disposal and sustainabiility as a whole, especially in a conceptual way than executional. I was able to work with two overarching enquiries through this project: **How do I use graphic communication to think about these topics, as opposed to simply representing them? How does visualisation aid in understanding possible and current realities?**