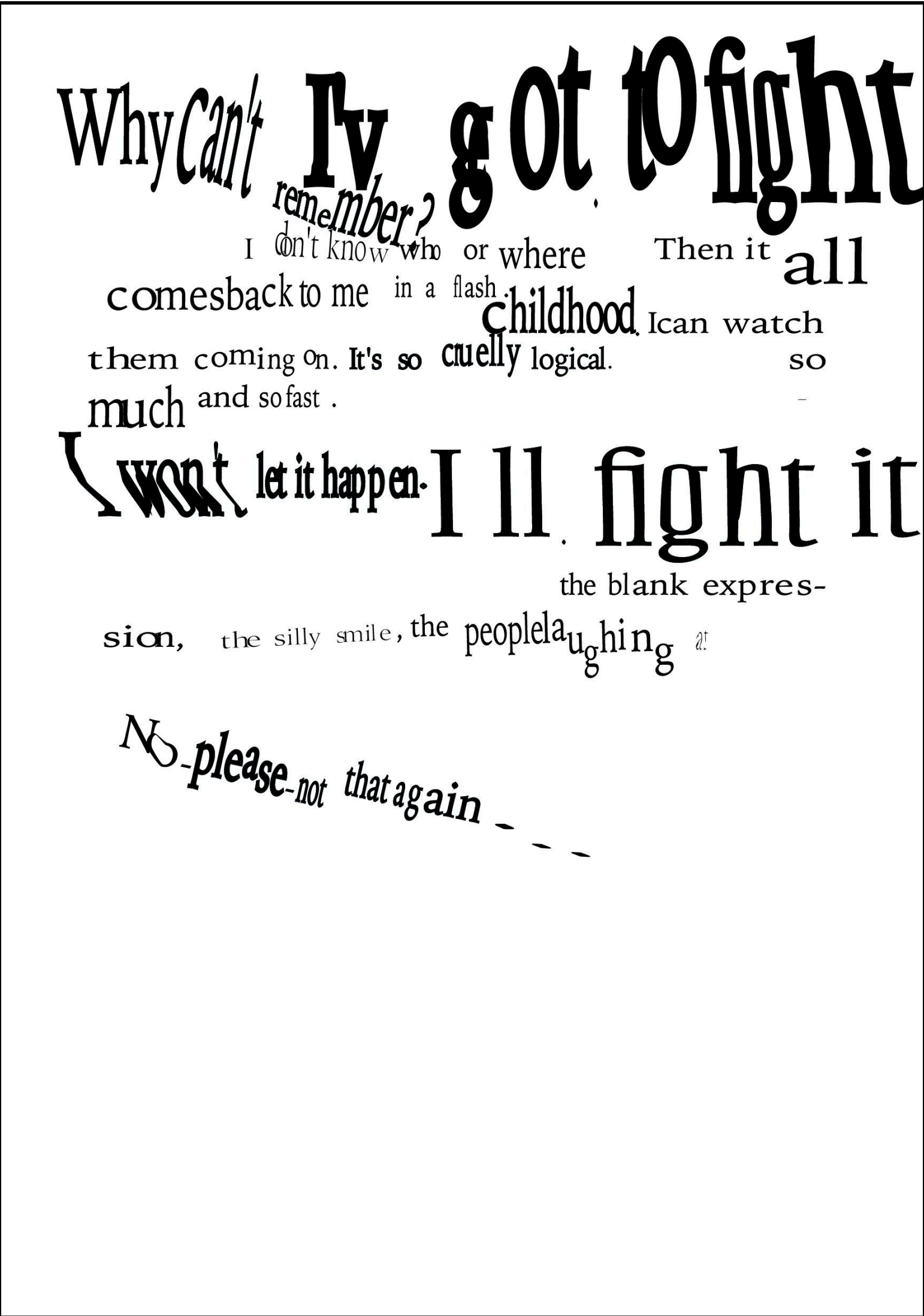


Positions through contextualising

Unit 2 · final presentation

Where I started

Use diary entries of Flowers for Algernon and trying to use this content to translate my inner experience and emotion when reading it and visualize it with the distortion of the text.



Should type be read, or felt?

**Form is content.
But by whose
decision?**

Exercises in Style

Raymond Queneau John Calder, [1947] 1998

One text retold ninety-nine times, each in a different style. The content never changes. The form changes everything. Formal variation is not decoration. It is where meaning is made.

'Fuck Content'

Michael Rock Multiple Signatures, Rizzoli, [1996] 2013

Graphic design's content is not what it depicts but how it presents. Form does not serve content. Form is content. What typography does to a word matters as much as what the word says.

**The reader
is never absent**

'The Task of the Translator'

Walter Benjamin | Illuminations, Schocken Books, [1923] 1969

Translation is not a transparent transfer of meaning. The original passes through a new body, and that body leaves its mark. The translator's presence is never invisible.

Roland Barthes

Michael Rock | Multiple Signatures, Rizzoli, [1996] 2013

Every reading is a projection. What a text means is always already shaped by who holds it. The reader's subjectivity is not a distortion of the text. It is the condition of reading.

Decision: if the reader's presence is inevitable, it can be made explicit. The reader is the subject.

**A subjective
approach is a
rigorous one**

Letters on America

Ed Fella | Princeton Architectural Press, 2000

A personal typographic language developed entirely by sensibility rather than external system. Idiosyncratic choices, specific to one practitioner's experience, constitute a rigorous and legitimate design practice.

Diagrammatic Writing

Johanna Drucker | Onomatopée, 2013

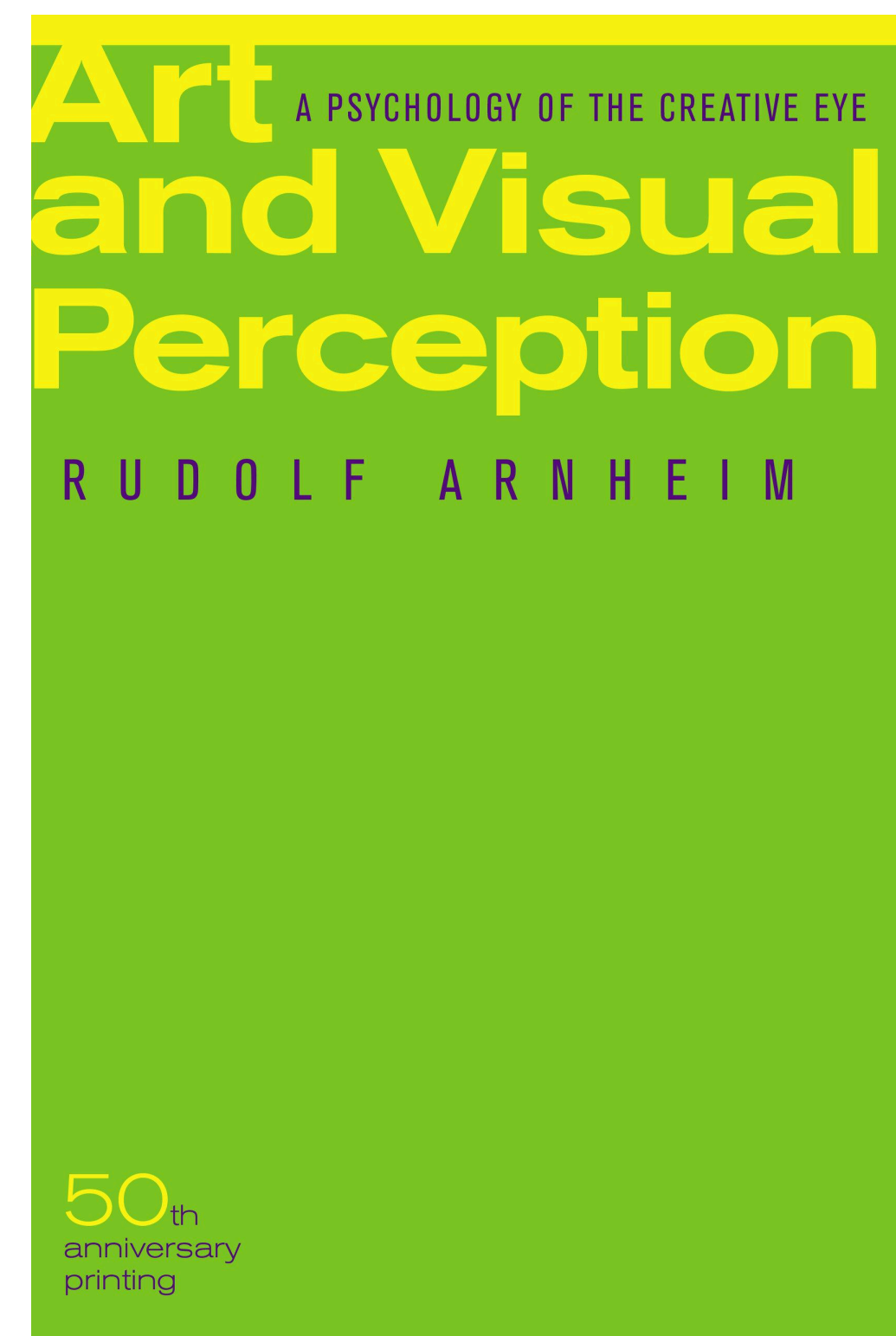
The visual and spatial organisation of text is inseparable from its meaning. Each typographic decision is not applied after the fact. It is the primary site where meaning is made.

Decision: the typographic choices are not illustrations of the reading. They are the reading. Each page documents one specific moment of encounter

Text Psychology

Rudolf Arnheim

Art and Visual Perception · 1954



Job

Anchor “form is content” in academic visual theory.

Found

Gestalt psychology proves visual elements (line, weight, direction) carry intrinsic expressive value. For example, a rising diagonal and a falling diagonal are not emotionally equivalent.

For my work

Legitimises the claim that typographic decisions are expressive before they are decorative.

V. S. Ramachandran & E. M. Hubbard

“Synaesthesia: A Window Into Perception, Thought and Language” · 2001

BOUBA / KIKI

95% of people, across languages and cultures, map “bouba” to round shapes and “kiki” to angular shapes.

Found

Cross-modal correspondence between abstract form and perception is non-arbitrary, predictable, and measurable.

“Form is content” stops being a metaphor. It becomes a falsifiable claim.

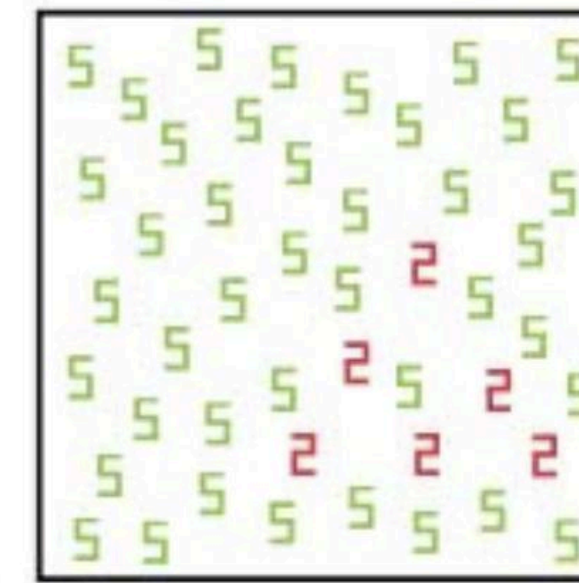
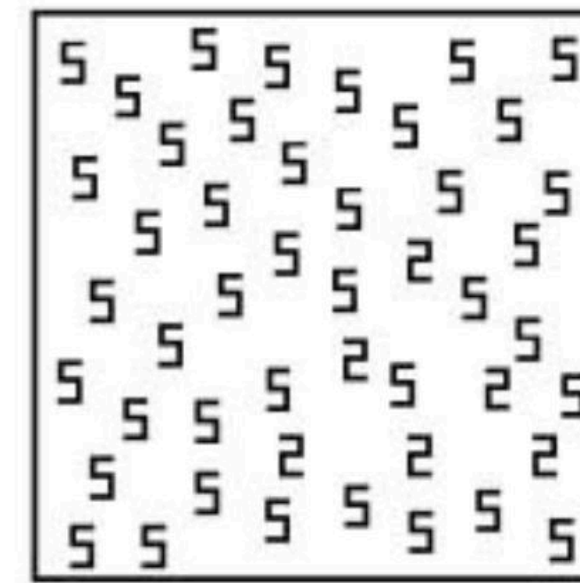


Figure 1: Schematic representation of displays used to test whether synaesthetically induced colours lead to pop-out. Left: When presented with a matrix of 5s with a triangle composed of 2s embedded in it, control subjects find it difficult to find the triangle. Right: However, because they see the 5s as (say) green and the 2s as red, our synaesthetic subjects were easily able to find the embedded shape.

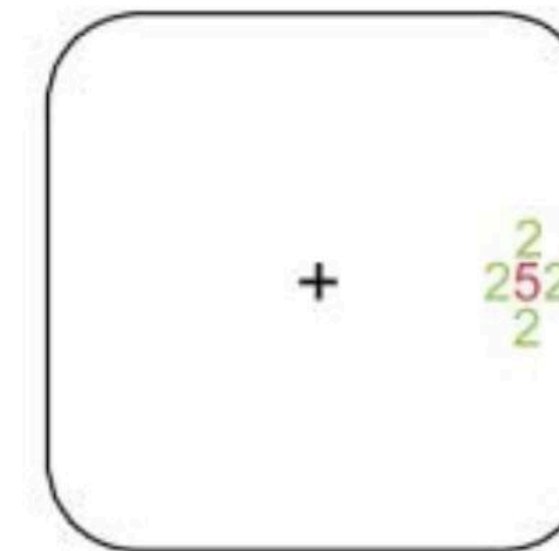
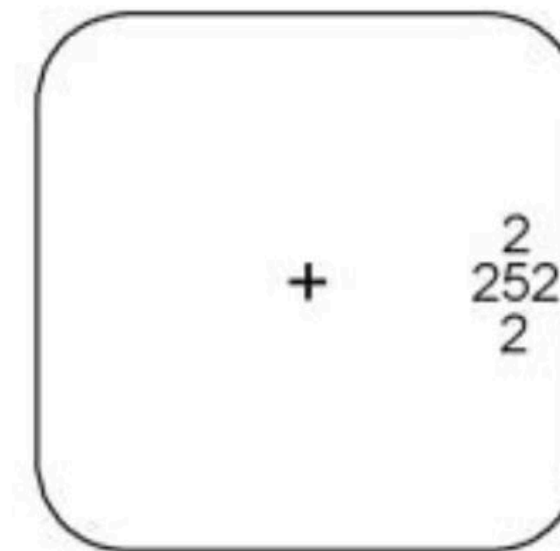


Figure 2: A demonstration of the effect of synaesthetically induced colours on crowding. A single grapheme presented in the periphery is easily identifiable. However, when it is flanked by other graphemes, the target grapheme becomes much harder to detect. Synaesthetic colours are effective (as are real colours) in overcoming this effect.

+ 5 5 5

Figure 3: Pictorial representation of the fall off in synaesthetic colours with increasing eccentricity. Even though graphemes were scaled so that they were larger in the periphery, our two synaesthetic subjects reported that they no longer experienced colours when the graphemes were presented.

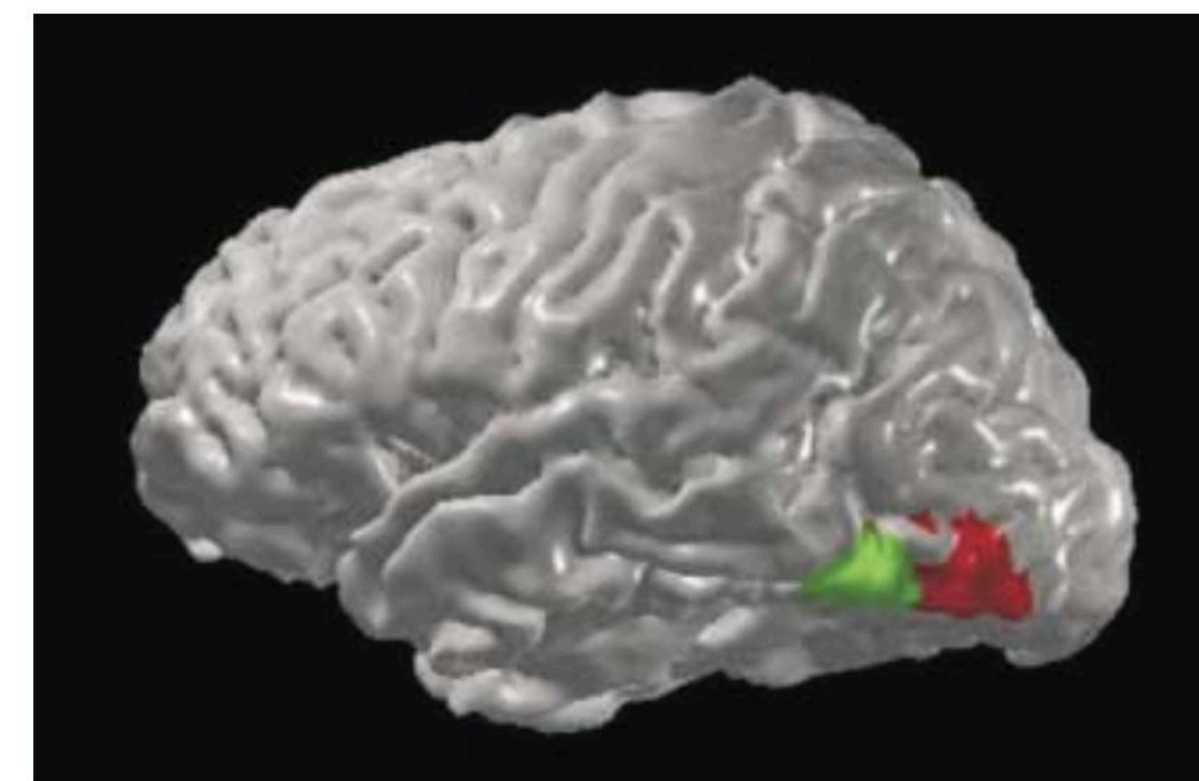
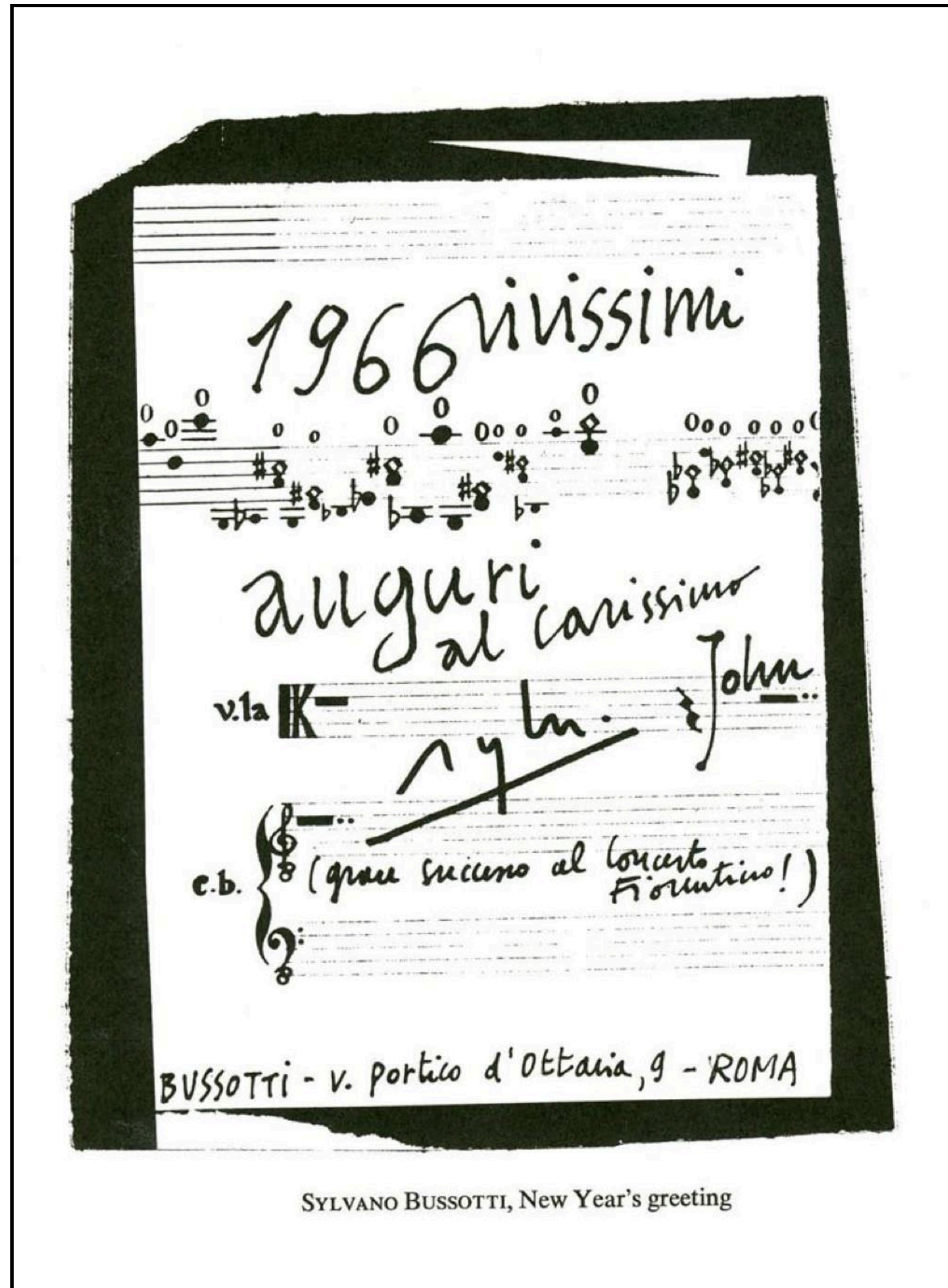


Figure 4: Schematic showing that cross-wiring in the fusiform might be the neural basis of grapheme-colour synaesthesia. Area V4 is shown in red while the number-grapheme area is shown in green.

From:
V.S. Ramachandran and E.M. Hubbard
‘Synaesthesia — A window into perception, thought and language’

John Cage

Notations · 1969



SYLVANO BUSSOTTI, New Year's greeting

Job

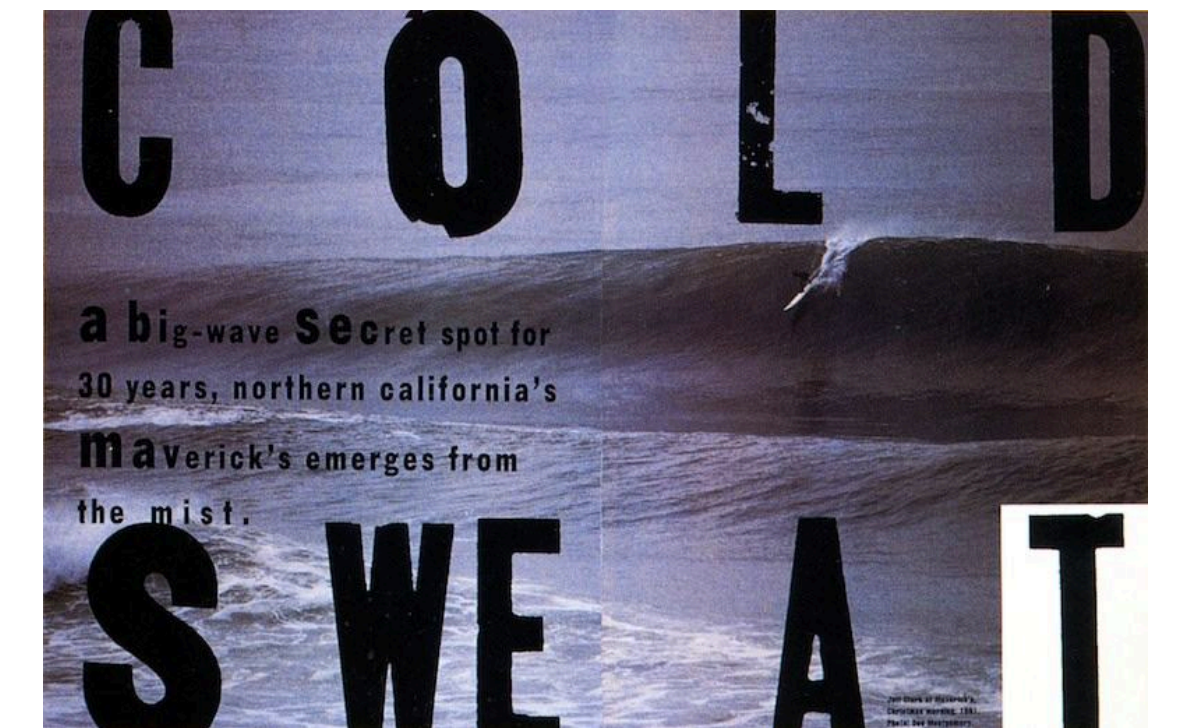
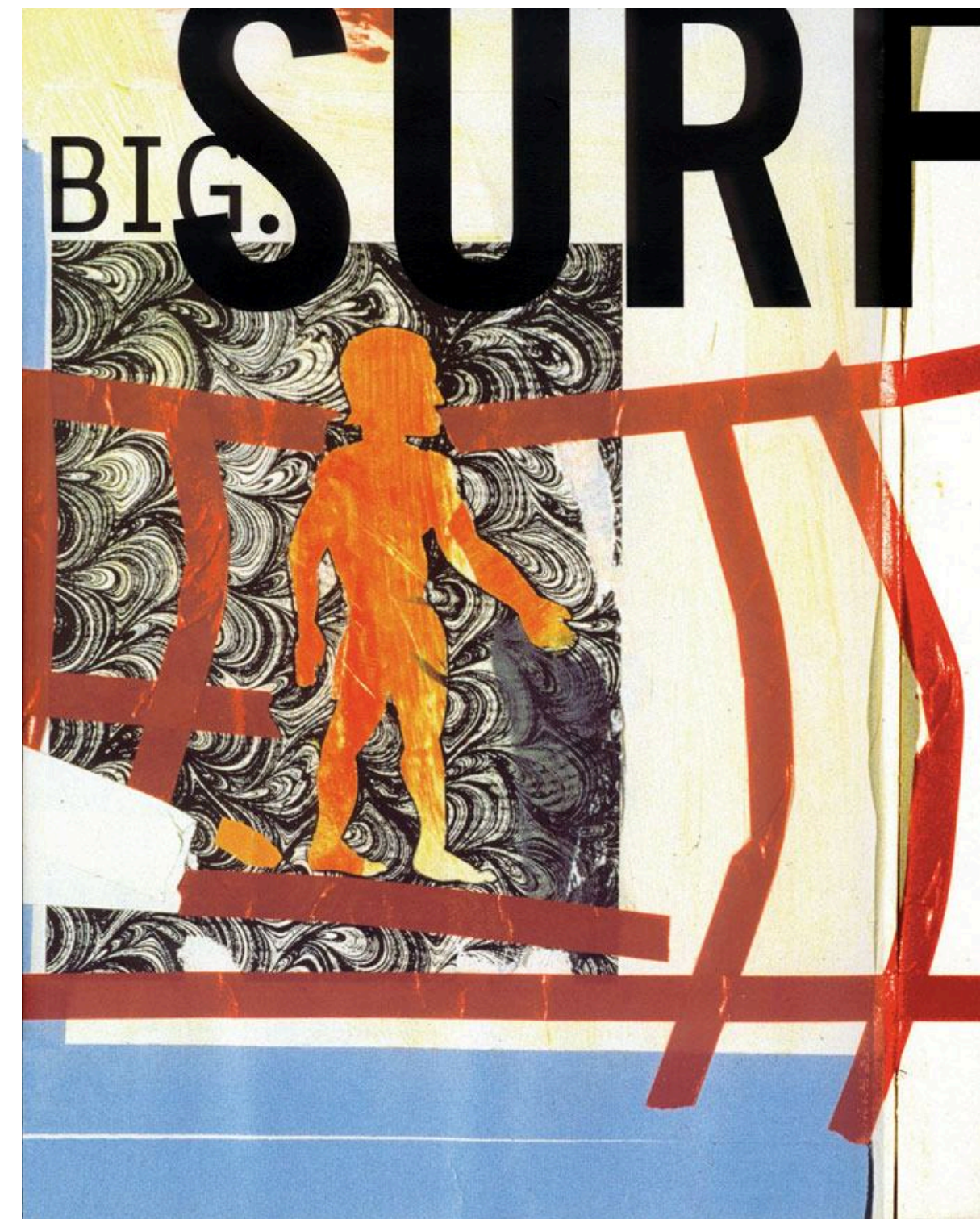
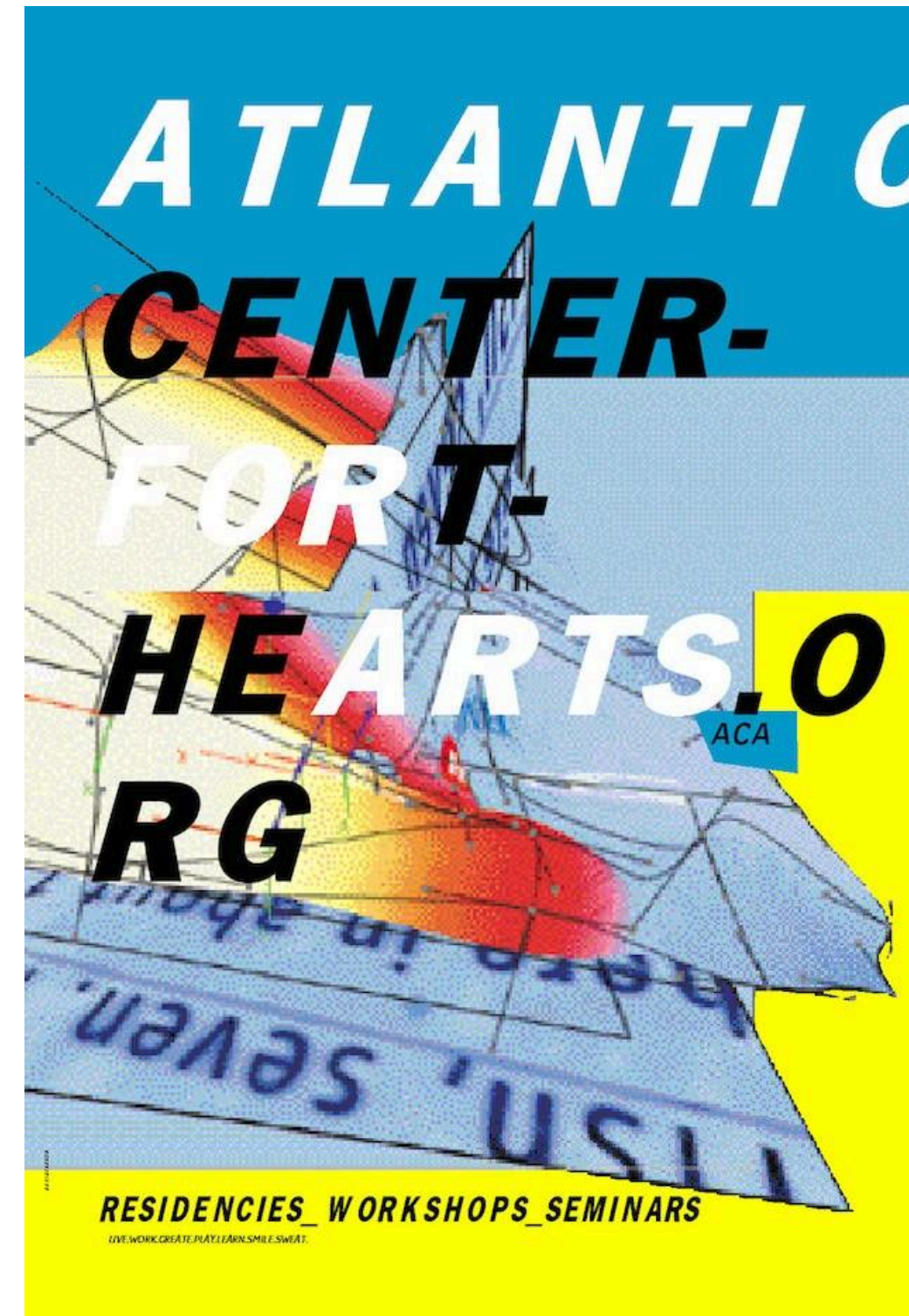
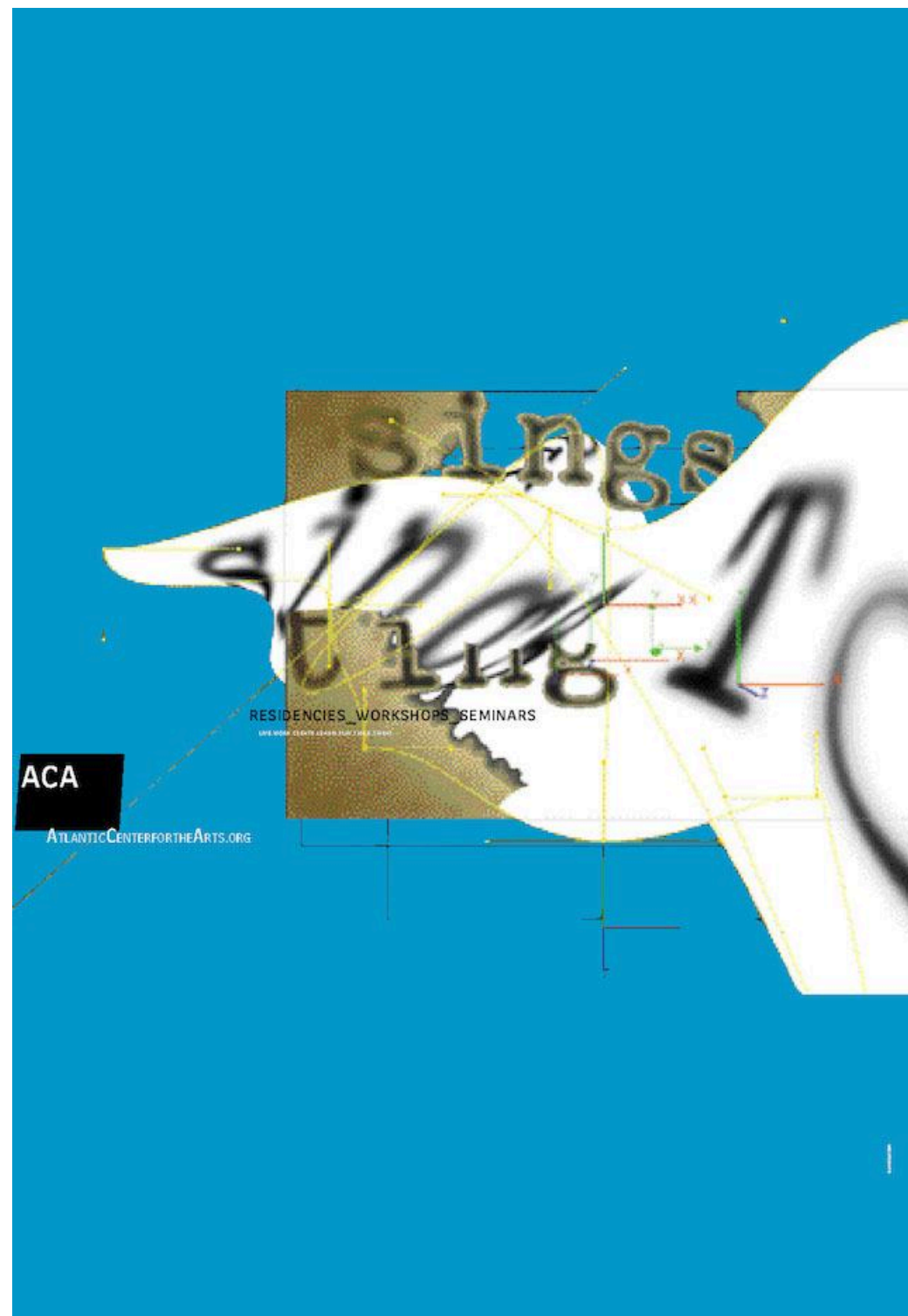
Find a primary archive of how others have already solved my problem.

Found

269 composers contributed experimental scores. Each page is one attempt to encode non-verbal information in visual form.

For my work

A working library of precedents for my own system. Lets me see which solutions transferred, which collapsed into private code, and which moves recur across very different practitioners.



"Don't mistake legibility for communication."

The magazine was founded in 1992, it proved to be an exploration of typography, layout and visual storytelling that would shift the approach of many graphic designers. Layouts were deliberately illegible. They still communicated through weight, tension, rhythm, and scale. He proved that type can be felt without being read.

— David Carson, Ray Gun magazine, 1992–1996



W W A V E

Typeface Gotham Black
Creator Tobias Frere-Jones
Year 2000

Done

Method of translation: extrapolation

I chose extrapolation as my translation method, taking the logic of David Carson and Kern type into a new medium: an interactive website.

The result is a system where users translate their own feeling into letterforms.

should type be read, or felt?

Eight words. Each one is a moment you have lived.
Arrange the letters until the word **feels like**
what it is.

- 01 **click** a letter to select it •
- 02 **drag** it anywhere on the canvas
- 03 **adjust** size, weight, and slant below
- 04 there is **no correct answer** – only what you feel

born ~ cry ~ breathe ~ remember ~ laugh ~ love ~ lose ~ forget

BEGIN

“Long and mechanical interaction”
“Can’t see others works directly”
“Create sentence?”
“Like the kerntype UI logic”

BORN b o r n	CRY c r y	BREATHE bre athe	REMEMBER re me ber
LAUGH laugh	LOVE love	LOSE l o s e	FORGET forget

Iteration 1: Gestures & Voice

Users controlled letterform through:

- Right hand pinch → size + slant
- Left hand pinch → weight
- Voice → letter selection

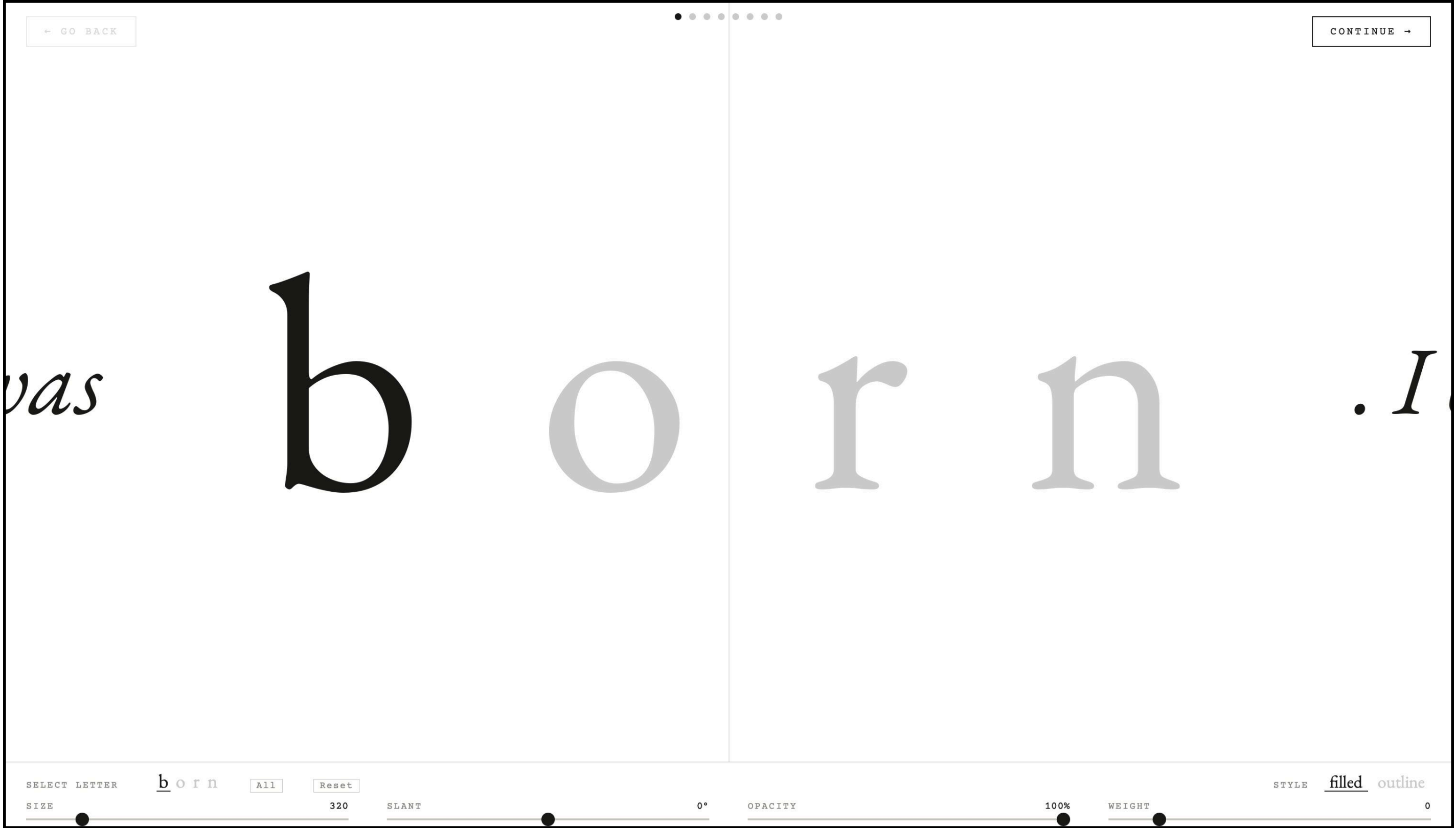
What I learned from testing:

- Too many parameters → users focused on figuring out the system, not feeling
- Gesture instability — hands shake, output is never quite what users intended
- "Close enough" cheating — users gave up when precision was hard

→ **The medium was getting in the way of the message.**



Iteration 2: Returning to Sliders, Adding Narrative



The Text & The Source

"I was born in 1951, but to me, 1951 happened after 1955. One day in 1955, I remember the calendar was printed in green ink — time, for me, began that weekend. Before that, 1951 was blank. It only became real, gradually, after that day. [...] Then 1951's winter borrowed the snow of 1956 so it could exist at all."

"我生于1951年，但在我，1951年却在1955年之后发生。1955年的某一天，我记得那天日历上的字是绿色的，时间，对我来说就始于这个周末。在此之前1951年是一片空白.....我不得不用1956年的雪去理解1951年的雪，从而1951年的冬天有了形象，不再是空白。"

The Text & The Source

In the [season] of [year], I was **born**. I cannot remember it. But after a loud **cry**, I learned to **breathe**. Before memory, [year] did not exist. Then one day, I **remember** the color of the calendar — time began there. I **laugh** before joy. I **cry** before loss. Years later, I exist. I **remember**, I **laugh**, I **cry**. I **love**, I **lose**, I **forget**.

The Scroll: Time as Conveyor Belt

The narrative scrolls horizontally, like a life passing.

When a keyword reaches the center, the scroll pauses. The user adjusts. Then it moves on.

Some keywords appear multiple times, cry, breathe, love, and they carry the typography you gave them the first time.

The faster sections of the scroll mirror how, at certain ages, time seems to accelerate.

Further Improvements

- a. Physical book / exhibition Printing all posters and binding them into a collective book.
- b. AI-generated narratives A version where each user's life-story is generated from their own input, but the challenge is keeping the prompts emotionally neutral across vastly different lives.
- c. Variable fonts Replacing my CSS distortion (`skewX`, `text-stroke`) with true variable-font axes for smoother, more typographically considered output. Instead of image maybe the output can be the typeface file.