

Positions through contextualising

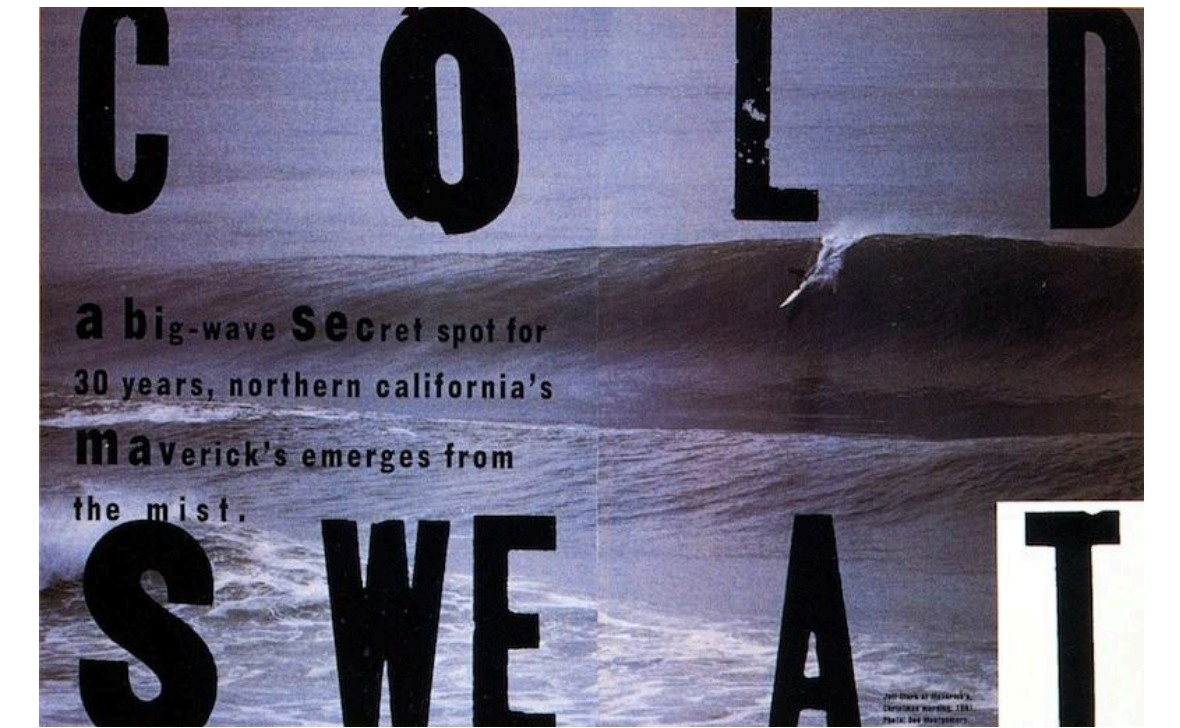
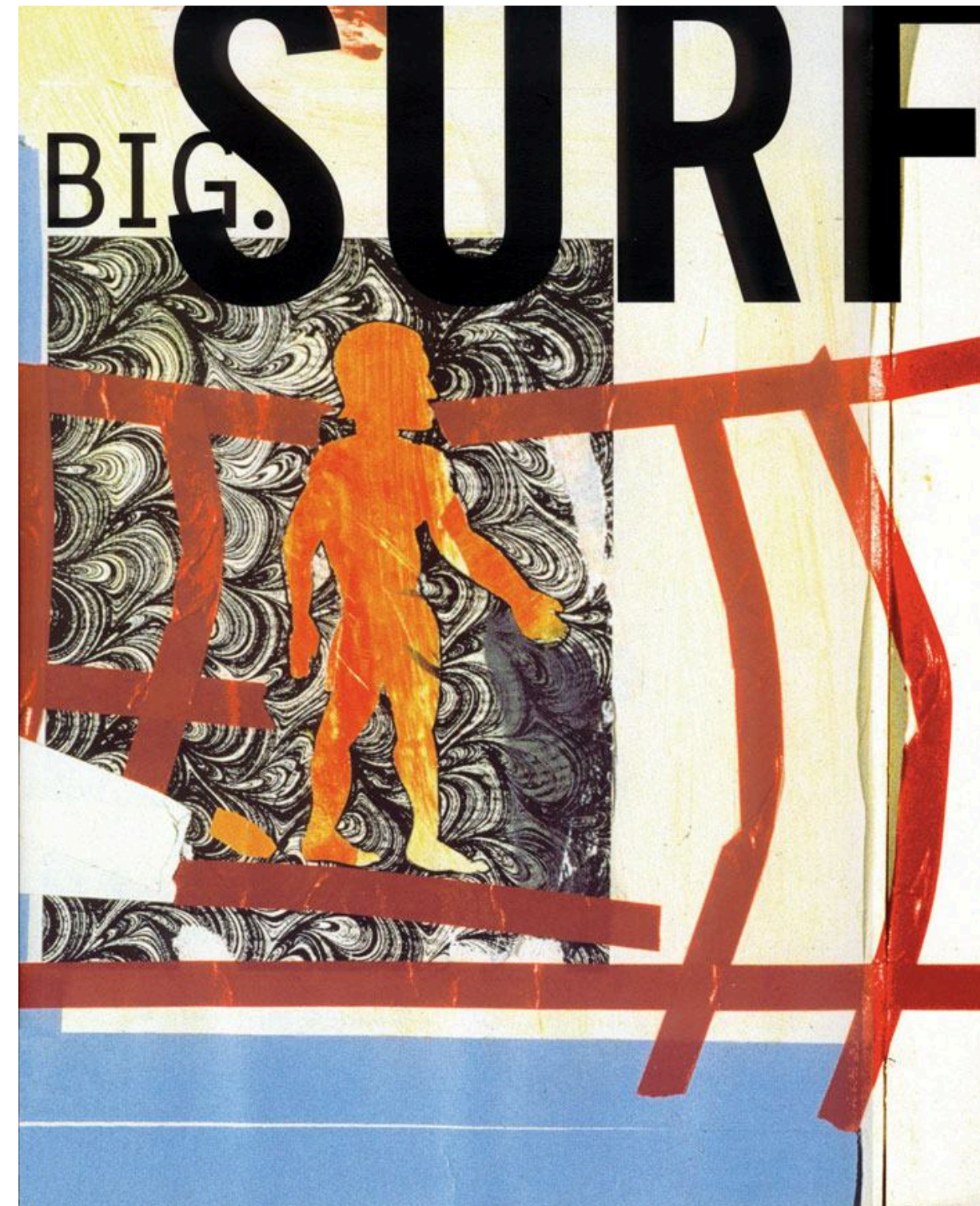
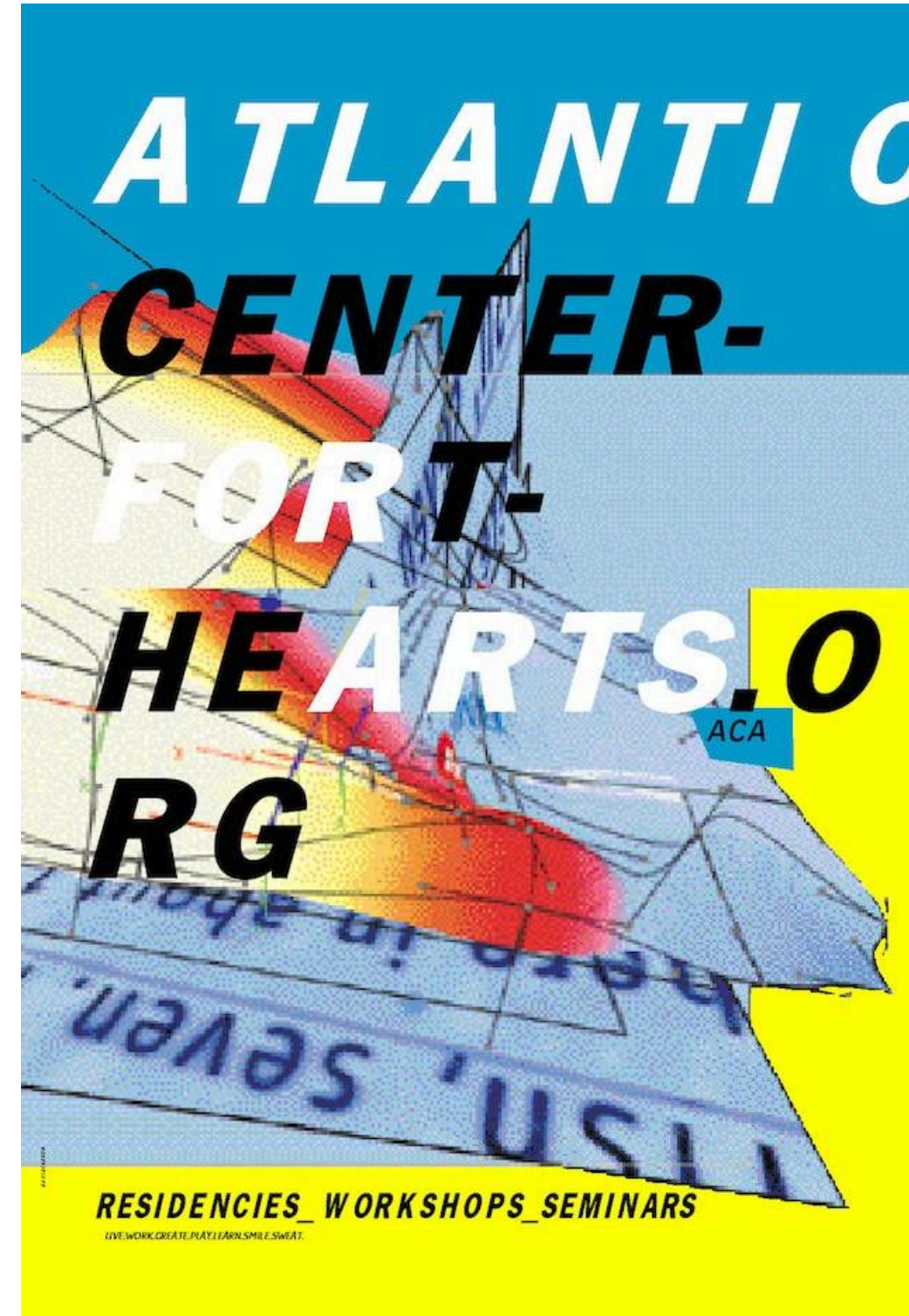
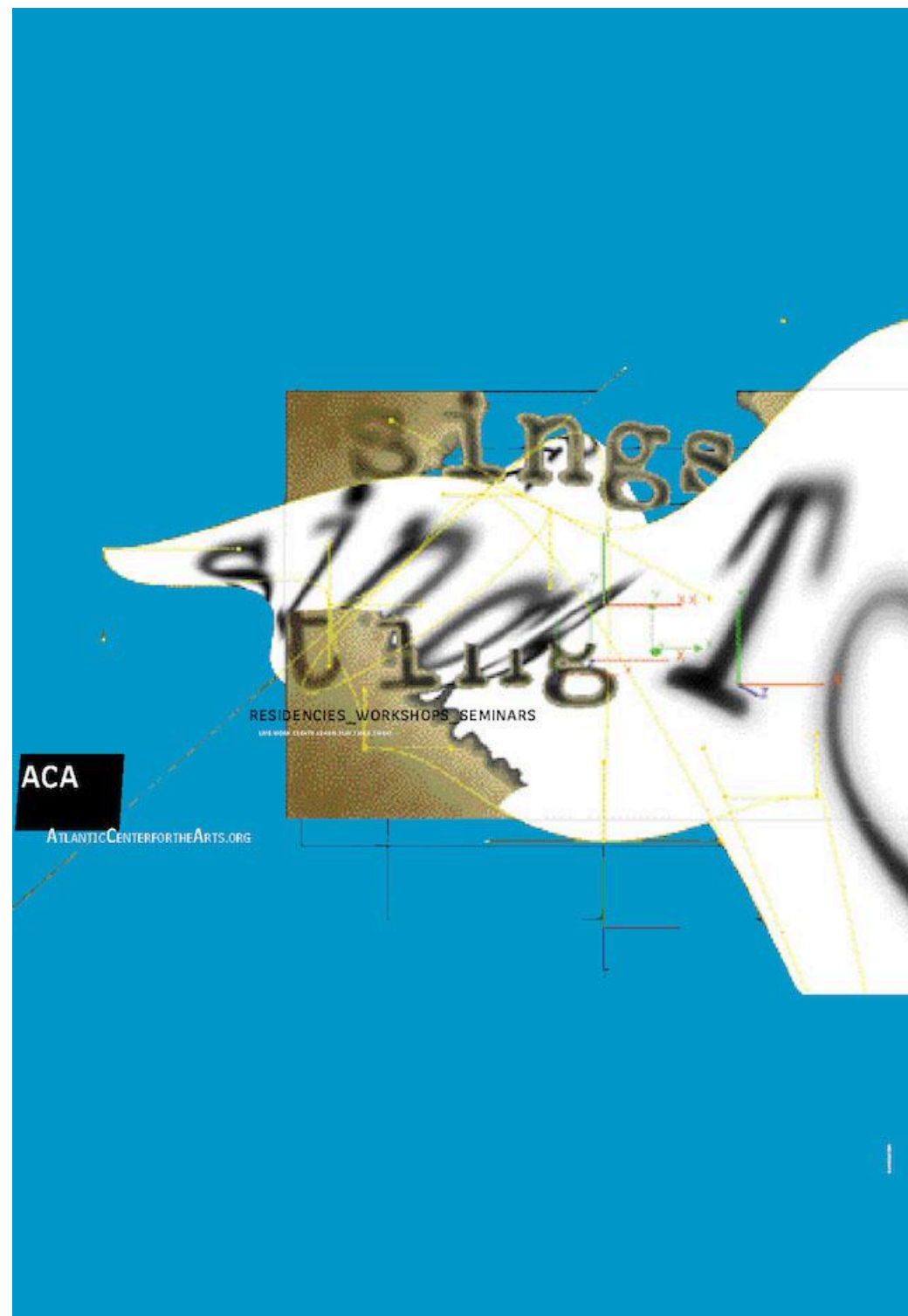
Unit 2 · Process Documentation week 2

Form is the content

Should type be read, or felt?

"Don't mistake legibility
for communication."

— David Carson, Ray Gun magazine, 1992–1996



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



KERNTYPE
a letter spacing game

Keyboard Shortcuts

WAVE

Typeface Gotham Black
Creator Tobias Frere-Jones
Year 2000

Done

<https://type.method.ac/#>

**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

Method of translation: extrapolation

Carson showed that illegible type can communicate.

The next question is: what exactly is being communicated, and is it the same for everyone?

The website takes Carson's argument and turns it into an experiment that can be run with many people at once. The translation moves from a single designer's editorial decisions to a collective, participatory record of felt responses.

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

A LIFE IN TYPE

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



What to improve next

The interaction felt too mechanical. The user has to think about which parameter to change rather than just responding to the word. Gesture-based or keyboard input that allows multiple parameters to change simultaneously, so the body can respond before the brain decides.

Users found the most meaningful moment was seeing all 8 of their words together, and comparing them with others. The comparison is where the research question gets answered. The archive section should be smoother and designed with evident comparison between different work.

Is felt response to type personal, or is there a shared typographic language operating beneath conscious reading?

The next step is to collect enough responses to find out.