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Interaction Design	Diploma Report
Fall 2020	Oslo School of Architecture and Design

www.backendbooks.no

## **Backend Books**

Backend Books - Tools for Experimental Publishing

- Backend Books is an exploratory diploma project that investigates the use of interaction design in a publishing context. The project aims to explore concepts, experiences and aesthetics in contemporary publishing, through a practical and experimental approach.
- o The project was divided into smaller modules, where each module looked at specific themes and tools, and resulted in a publication.
- o Through a hands-on approach, and a "learning-by-doing" mentality, the project posed a challenge of what a designer as a "one-person-operation" can produce.
- o The outcome of the project is a set of artifacts used to illustrate a potential within the context of publishing. The artifacts take the form of products, tools and processes, that aim to question *fixed ideas* related to publishing.

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# Preface

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#### ↓ Ready, set go!



Modern in London, we hosted a workshop with Con-

verse in Gothenburg and had a pop-up shop in Tokyo.

We have also won several awards, among them a Yellow Pencil from D&AD and a gold from Visuelt. For

client work we've mostly done work within media and

culture, for clients such as Apollo Records, VGTV and

Red Bull. Ok, enough bragging!

The external motivation comes from my affinity and fas-

cination for books and publishing. I've always been a keen reader and I'm very attracted to the book as both

a cultural and artistic object. I have experience from

self-publishing as well as working as a designer with

larger publishers - so this is a field I want to explore

further. I'm also very interested in emerging technologies and the utilization of these in new contexts. I see a vast room of opportunities when it comes to using

digital media in the space of publishing.

#### Intention

- My intention with this project has on the one hand been to develop and position myself as a designer, and on the other to create artifacts that envisions a new potential in publishing. By working in an experimental manner I aimed to look at the context with a new perspective and challenge some of the preconceived notions about publishing.
- The aim of the work I produced was to have a way of talking about possibilites with future collaborators, clients and anyone who is interested. The projects aims to visualize potential of a conceptual and technical nature, as well as my capabilites as a designer.
- A personal intention with the project has been to use this last semester of eduction to learn as much as possible, and try to close the gaps in my design repertoire. From my experience with client work, one of those gaps is to build fully functioning digital interactive products.

#### Approach

- Working with this project it has been important to find an approach that suits me, and that will benefit me as a designer after graduation. Working exploratory and experimentally has always been an important part of my process. I like to work hands-on, and allow the tools and materials I use to shape the outcome of the project. I enjoy working on all aspects of a project, from initial idea to development and implementation.
- Even though my design practice is mostly based in a digital context, I like to think of a large portion of what I'm doing as craftsmanship. The ability to make "things", either digital or physical, is important to me, rather than merely visualizing them. The goal throughout the diploma has therefore been to create functioning products and actually publishing the results.
- This project has also been a demonstration of "learning by doing". I intended from the get go to use this project as a way of learning new tools and techniques, and use what I learn along the way to shape the project.

#### Publishing in 2020

- Talking about "publishing" in 2020 is a complex matter. In an increasingly digital society the place and value of printed media is harder to define. We spend more time on smartphones (Wurmser, 2019), social media, e-books and podcasts, and less time with printed books, newspapers and publications (Ingraham, 2018). This doesn't necessarily mean that *print* is dead as the infamous saying goes rather its role in the digital age has changed.
- The emergence of the World Wide Web has had a massive impact on most parts of our society, and publishing is no exception. The act of making something public has never been easier or more available. We constantly publish our thoughts on Twitter, our images on Instagram and our life events on Facebook. The notion of what publishing is as in making something public is radically different to what it was only a few decades ago.
- The traditional publishing industry has also been affected by this digital shift, most prominently seen in the form of eBooks. Though eBooks have been incorporated as a digital alternative by most commercial publishers, many of the larger publishing houses still seem tied to the traditional publishing processes; struggling to adapt to the digital climate of today.

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# **Project Setup**

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This project is a different interaction design diploma. In the following pages I will go through the foundation for this project: the conceptual framework, the structure, and the constraints.

#### ↓ The inner mechanics of the project



#### Backend Books as a resource and an archive

The other way I used Backend Books as a construct, came from how I wanted the project to stand as a whole after its completion. The main aim of the project was to explore interaction design in a publising context, so by treating Backend books as a resource platform for experimental publishing, I could use it to collect all my work in a unifying context.

In that manner the function of my project would be to stand as demonstrations of concepts. This way it highlights that my project as a whole is more about the tools, concepts and execution, and less about the actual publications and their content.

#### Module-based approach

In addition to the conceptual framework Backend Books as a construct provided, I needed a structural framework for how I was going to work with the diploma project.

Dividing the project into shorter modules was a way for me to explore a wide set of themes and to learn more about the suitable tools, software and materials necessary for each module. In each module I would explore a certain theme, technique or material and see what might come out of it, and how it's possible to apply this to different use cases.

#### **Backend Books**

Backend Books is the title of the project, but it has also been the conceptual framework for this diploma. Since this has been an exploratory project, without the aim of solving a specific problem, I needed to create a context for my explorations. This is why I created the construct "Backend Books". Backend Books has been a framework for the diploma in two different ways, depending on the point of view.

Backend Books as experimental publishing practice

To open up for experimentation in the field of publishing I wanted to use Backend Books as a small, independent publisher. Using this as a foundation allowed me to work in the context of publishing without having to deal with all the constraints and routines of the larger publishing houses. By focusing on "experimental publishing" I could freely draw inspiration from different forms of publishing and use my projects to reflect back on them.

I wanted to explore the notion of a design-driven publishing practice, with a conceptual approach. And to use interaction design as a tool for creating both the context and content for publications. This was a way to guide my project, and use it to develop my designerly skills.

Through this construct I could use the publishing house as a platform and the publication as a medium for digital and physical exploration.

This framework suited the exploratory nature of the project, but it also placed me as a designer in a non-traditional position. I would take on the role as the publisher, the editor and the producer of the publications – and I would use my skills and my preferences as constraints.

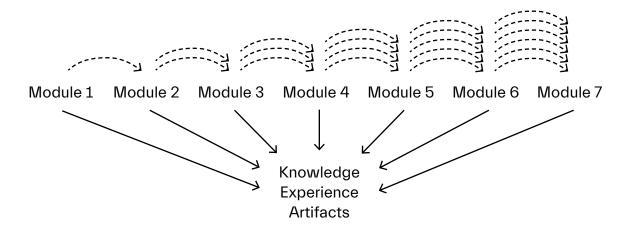
#### The modules

Each of the modules would deal with a specific theme and result in one publication. Each module would last for approximately two weeks, which meant that it would be a very condensed design process. I would start with ideation, then create a concept, learn the tools necessary to execute it, build, test and iterate, and then publish it in some manner – all in the span of two weeks.

With each publication I wanted to explore:

- o Interaction design as a tool for making publications
- o Intrinsic qualities of digital and physical media
- o Data as material and content
- o Collaborative and generative content creation
- o Physical vs. digital context See p. 22

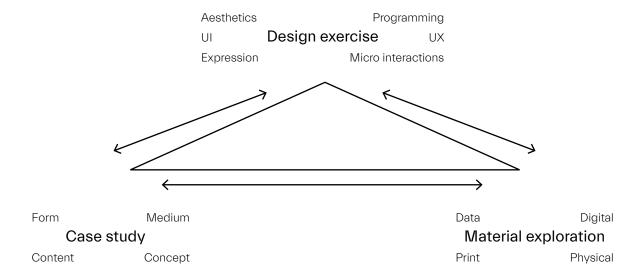
These areas of exploration came out of my initial research phase, and were created to provide ground rules for each module. These were themes I found particularily interesting, with a potential to create reflection around my main topic: interaction design in a publishing context.



The module based structure allowed me to learn from each module, apply my learnings in the next module, and end up with a series of artifacts, technical knowledge and practical experience.

#### Format

Using the modules to create small publications allowed me to work with each project as a three-fold exercise:



As a design exercise I used each project to improve and expand my designerly skills. This involved working aesthetically, using typography, composition and visual elements deliberately for each project. It involved crafting and implementing micro and macro interactions across the different parts of the projects. And in general I used all my design skills to create solid digital and physical products.

As a material exploration I dived into various digital and physical materials and found processes to work with them constructively. I was interested in working with less tangible materials such as different types of data, to see how this might be used as a form of content in a publication.

As a case study I wanted to look at the form, medium and concept of each publication. I wanted to challenge the traditional notion of what a publication is, and utilize aspects of digital media in novel ways in a publishing context.

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#### Constraints

An important part of this diploma has been the fact that I positioned myself as the producer of all the content. I wanted to use this project to push myself in what I'm capable of producing as an individual designer, handling the projects from ideation to implementation. This means that I would not settle for making prototypes in Figma or similar tools, but actually build and program fully functioning products.

I'm used to working with code and programming as part of the design process, and through this diploma I wanted to further develop my skills in this area. It's important to note that I am primarily a designer, and not a programmer, so when I'm working with programming I'm doing it in a designerly manner. This means that what the code is doing is more important than how it is written – it might not always be super elegant, or optimized for performance, but if it gets the job done, I'm happy!

A motivation for doing this comes from my aspiration to primarily work within the culture industry after graduating. This will often involve working with small clients, and small budgets. Having the capability of providing a full service, from concept and ideation, graphic design and interaction design as well as programming and implementation will vastly strengthen my practice.

#### Intention v.2

Beeing a slightly untraditional interaction design diploma, this project does not revolve around a clearly defined problem statement or group of users. Through the two viewpoints on Backend Books described earlier, there are also two different intentions of the project.

The main intent of the individual modules is to create interesting artistic expressions, concepts and experiences, rather than utilitarian products. By being both the publisher and the creator (or author if you will) of the publications it also positioned me as the validator of the projects. This meant that when making design desicions throughout this project it was more often on a basis of how X would fit into the current concept or theme, or how I as a publisher and producer felt X was inline with the vision for the current module. This has also resulted in this report being written in a quite subjective language.

The intent of the project as a whole however is to visualize a potential of using design actively in a publishing context. In light of this the diploma can be relevant for designers, publishers and in general people involved in adjacent parts of the culture industry. This shaped the final contribution of the project, which you can read more about in the penultimate chapter of this report.

The project revolves heavily around me as an individual designer. I've positioned myself as:

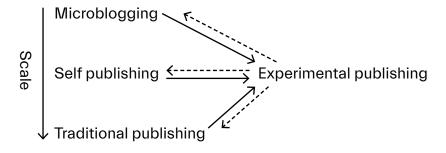
- o Designer (duh)
- o Publisher
- o Producer
- Developer in order to expand my tool kit and see what I'm capable of doing as a "one-person-operation".

It's an experimental diploma, without a clear problem statement, with the aim of crafting functional "products" and artifacts. Its approach is untraditional, with untraditional outcomes (in an AHO context).

I'm using interaction design in a publishing context, through that process I aim to reflect on both the role of the designer, and the process of publishing.



By focusing on "experimental publishing" I can draw inspiration freely from different forms of publishing and use my projects to reflect back on them.



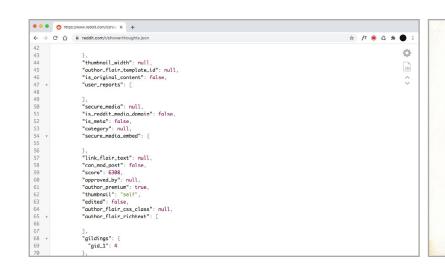
# **Further Considerations**

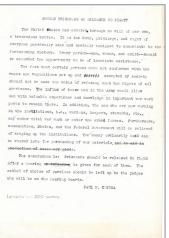
#### Content

Working in the context of publishing naturally requires some kind of content. Early on I was eager to focus my diploma on collaboration with writers, exploring the role of interaction design in a publishing process. After deciding on working with modules that were 1 – 2 weeks in length I realized that this would become a challenge. I could not pay the collaborators either, so this turned out to be practically impossible.

Instead I chose to flip the perspective, and rather think about how I as a designer can rethink what the content can be. This gave the project a slightly different framework, which was equally interesting to me. It resulted in working with a lot of public domain content, open API's, user contributed content and generative content. Using this type of content was a way of allowing the con-

Jsing this type of content was a way of allowing the content to reflect back on the subject matter, as well as the form it would be wrapped in.







#### Format

Drawing inspiration from experimental and independent publishing practices, I wanted to frame the projects around a medium related to these contexts. Due to the fast paced nature of my projects it also made sense to work with a format that is typically made in similar manners.

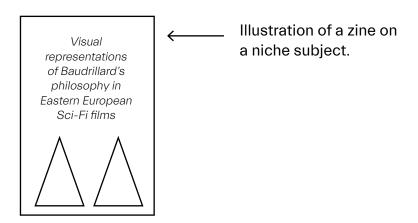
A zine is a self-published, non-commercial print-work that is typically produced in small, limited batches. Zines are created and bound in many DIY ways, but traditionally editions are easily reproduced—often by crafting an original "master flat", and then photocopying, folding, and/or stapling the pages into simple pamphlets.

People who create zines are likely to be more motivated by self-expression and artistic passion than they are by profit: zines are usually inexpensive and sometimes distributed for free or in trade for other zines, goods, and services.

Zines can touch on a variety of topics from music and art, to politics, sexuality, humor and personal memoir. Their content may be written, drawn, printed, collaged, or any other form of combining words and imagery—a zine's structure may be narrative, journalistic, comic-like, or completely abstract. (What Is a Zine?, n.d.)

My intentions with these projects were very much in the ethos of zine-culture; exploring niche themes in a short form publication. Using the zine as a foundation and inspiration felt like a natural way of framing the projects.

Doing this also allowed for an interesting exercise in translating qualities from a physical to a digital context. I didn't want the digital projects to simply emulate a zine, but rather find some of its inherent qualities and translate them in a suiting manner to a digital context.



#### A general note on aesthetics

Working with such short modules I was required to make pragmatic decisions throughout the process. I wanted to use all constraints and limitations constructively, instead of trying to hide them or work around them. One way this manifested was through the aesthetics of the projects. A large portion of the work I did is web based. Using the material qualities of HTML and CSS to form the aesthetics was a way to work efficiently, but also to establish a visual language that spans the projects. This "CSS-brutalism" also fits in on a conceptual level, referencing the digital nature of the projects.

#### Covid-19

Writing a diploma in the midst of a pandemic naturally provided some challenges. Instead of letting this limit my project I wanted to use the constraints it entailed constructively. The outcome of this was that I ended up focusing on a medium that would still be accessible for an audience, wether we were in a period of heavy restrictions or not. Thus, this diploma revolves around mainly using the internet with the browser as a medium.

I had initially also wanted to experiment with physical contexts, spaces and events – but this made little sense to do in 2020.

The decision to primarily work with web based experiences was a constraint I used to guide the project and it also placed my project in a context suitable for the time we live in.

# Research

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When begining this project it was important to familiarize myself with the context properly. I did a fair amount of desktop research, exploring the history and state-of-the-art projects that seemed relevant to the project. I had several conversations/interviews with experts on the field, and I did a lot of reading. The following section is an extraction of the most relevant findings from the research phase.

#### ↓ This is me



History

#### Dieter Roth - Post War Deconstruction

The question of what a book can or can't be is something artists have continued to play around with. *Literaturwurst* is a work by Dieter Roth which truly questions the form of a book. The series of artists' books were made using traditional sausage recipes, but replacing the meat with paper from a book or magazine. The cover of the publication would then be pasted on the skin of the sausage.

The series was later produced by Editions René Block, a Berlin based publisher.

# TOPOGRAPHIE DER TYPOGRAPHIE (Einige Thesen aus den) demnächst erscheinenden Buche von El. LISSITZKV.) 1. Die Wörter des gedruckten Bogens werden abgesehen, nicht abgehört. 2. Durch konventionelle Worte teilt man Begriffe mit, durch Buchstaben soll der Begriff geställtet werden. 3. Occomme des Ausdrucks — Optik anstatt Phonetik, 4. Die Gestaltung des Buchraumes durch das Material des Satzes nach den Gesetzen der typographischen Mechanik muß den Zug- und Druckspannungen des Inhaltes entsprechen. 5. Die Gestaltung des Buchraumes durch das Material der Klischees, die die neue Optik realisieren. Die supernaturalistische Realität des vervollkommneten Optik realisieren. Die supernaturalistische Realität des vervollkommneten Schrift-Steller. Tintenfaß und Gänsekiel sind tot. 8. Der gedruckte Bogen überwindet Raum und Zeit. Der gedruckte Bogen, die Unendlichkeit der Bücher, muß überwunden werden. DIE ELEKTROBIBLIOTHEK. Die Redaktion ist nicht mit allen Thesen einverstanden, da sie einen Zusammenhang zwischen Text und Buchstabengestaltung nur bedingt anerkennt.



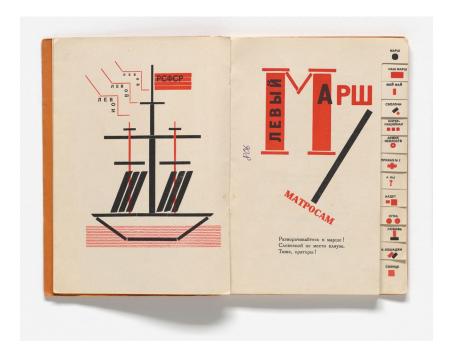
- ← For the Voice by El Lissitzky(Letterform Archive, 2020)
- ↑Topographie der Typographie by El Lissitzky (MoMA, 2016)
- → Literaturwurst by Dieter Roth (Estate of Dieter Roth, 2020)

The book as both medium and object is deeply embedded in our culture, and I am in no way the first to do experiments in the context of publishing. In order to contextualize my project and show the lineage of work that precedes this diploma I want to go through a brief bit of history. I've drawn out some examples of work that has been inspirational for this project.

The Russian Avant-Garde - Early book explorations

Already in 1923 the Russian avant-gardist El Lissitzky was questioning the format of the book, and wrote a manifesto calling for a new type of book. The Topography of Typography contains claims such as "The new book demands the new writer. Inkpot and quill-pen are dead." and "The printed sheet transcends space and time. The printed sheet, the infinity of the book, must be transcended."

Lissitzky also experimented with the format of the book in more practical manners. The book *Dlia Golosa* (For the Voice) is a collection of poems by Vladimir Mayakovsky, designed specifically for being read out loud.



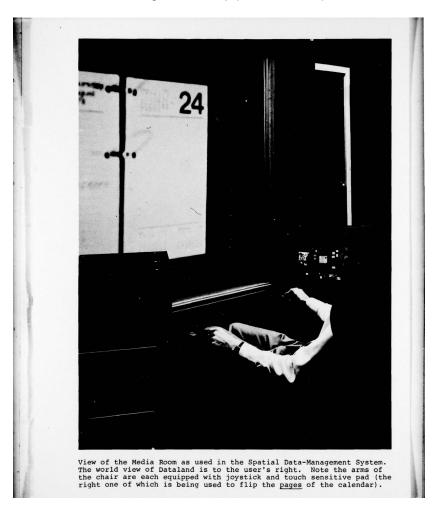
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#### MIT Media Lab - Early Explorations for the Screen

This experimentation with the format of the book was eventually destined to enter the digital realm, which it did quite early at the MIT. Two notable figures were Muriel Cooper and Nicholas Negroponte.

"Books Without Pages" is one of their projects which explores interaction and reading experiences with screen based media. In Cooper's project "Information Landscapes" she and her students explored virtual 3D typography and information visualization, among other things.

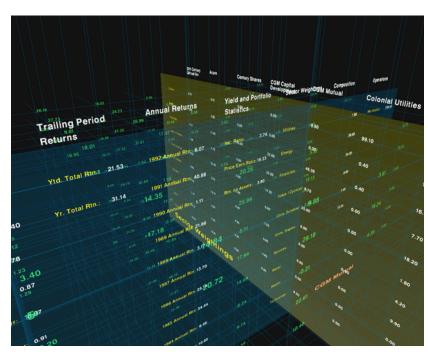
- ↓ Books Without Pages (Negroponte, 1979, pp. 5)
- ≥ Information Landscapes (Cooper, 2011)
- → Jason Nelson's Digital Poetry (Nelson, n.d.)



#### Net Art and E-poetry - Connected Art

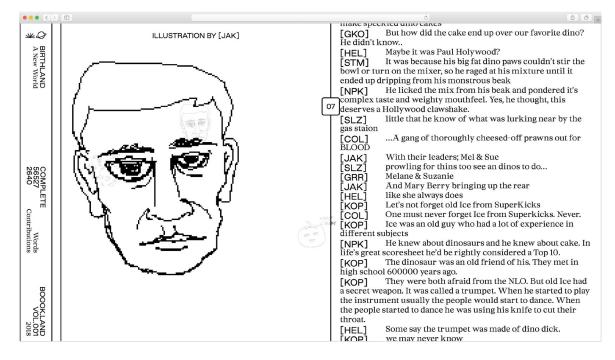
Eventually, the accessibility of the world wide web opened up a realm of exploration for artists. New genres of art emerged, such as Netart and E-poetry. Jason Nelson is a prominent figure in the genre of hypermediapoetry, a subgenre of E-poetry specifically relating to the use of nonlinear media incorporating graphics, audio, video, text and hyperlinks.





### State of the Art

In this section I want to draw attention to a few selected projects that deal with the same themes as this diploma. I consider these projects to be "state of the art", as in being some of the most interesting projects that utilize digital and/or physical media in novel ways, to create engaging experiences and aesthetics.

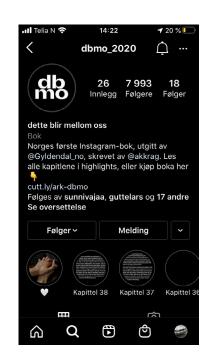


#### BOOOK.LAND ↑

BOOOK.LAND was a project by Harry Boyd and Twomuch Studio. They asked themselves "What if writing followed a process similar to design? Can play and collaboration be used to write a book? Can a novel be produced by hundreds of authors and illustrators all working together on the same story?" (Boyd & Twomuch Studio, 2020). The result is an online collaborative, illustrated novel. I find the project inspiring in its playful use of digital / connected media to question the established format of the book. It was a self initiated and self published project, which managed to engage a vast amount of people.

DBMO - Norway's first "Instagram book"

Earlier this year (2020) Gyldendal – one of the largest publishing houses in Norway, launched an ambitious project called *Dette blir mellom oss.* It's the debut novel of writer Aleksander Kielland, which in addition to being released as a printed book, audio book and eBook, was released through the social media platform Instagram. It manifested through video clips and text in the "story"-feature Instagram offers. Kielland (2020) says that he hopes the Instagram concept could contribute to getting a younger audience to read more books; "DBMO reaches the readers where they are, and it doesn't take much to follow the story through short passages in the feed and stories".







- The books instagram profile. All the chapters of the book are saved as "highlights", accessible at all times.
  - One of the "pages" as seen in the story.
  - The text was accompanied by images, video and audio, with actors playing out the story in small fragments.

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#### The Noise of Being

The Noise of Being is a multimedia and multiplatform work by the designstudio The Rodina. The work was initially supposed to only be a book for the Sonic Acts Festival 2017, but the designers also wanted to transform the book into a spatial experience the users could explore.

I reached out to Tereza Ruller from the studio The Rodina, asking about the thoughts and process behind the work:

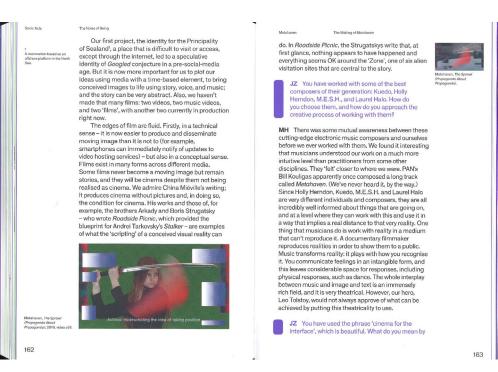
"This 2017 book contains essays about intersectional feminism, ecology, afrofuturism, forensic architecture, institutional critique, alternatives to capitalism, etc. and we were desperate to activate this important knowledge locked inside it. Our questions were: How to make content accessible & attractive to people who don't typically read such books? How to make it more inclusive? How to transform the content into a spatial experience? What if spreads become walls and you can walk around them? ... What happens when the book becomes an environment?"

"It all started thinking about affect & affordances in communication design. That led us (The Rodina) to propose the term "performative design" for a practice that incorporates graphic design, playfulness, bodies, action, and eventness (understanding this as a unique time and space). Here, the performance becomes an alternative mode of value production and a space for critique and imagination. Investigating action and interaction just led to making a game out of the book. "

"We like to think about/design ways in which experience, knowledge and relations are produced and preserved. Communication design was never static for us (it's in constant flux, movement and unrepeatable moment). We often explore the spatial and interactive possibilities of virtual environments as a space for new thoughts and aesthetics that come forward from between culture and technology. We use games and now virtual worlds as spaces where we can share our artistic research."



State of the Art



I find the project inspirational in its holistic approach, working elegantly across print and digital media, blurring the borders between the virtual and the physical. Their approach to the project, and vision of manifesting a spatial experience based on a book is very fascinating and inspirational.

William Stormdal is a senior designer at Bleed and founder of the small publishing practice Pseudonym Publishing. I had a conversation with him about his experiences with experimental publishing and thoughts on publishing in general. [Edited for relevance and clarity]

Can you give a brief introduction about Pseudonym Publishing?

Pseudonym Publishing is almost three years old, and we have published ten titles. It started as a response to the fact that designers always end up in the end of the publishing process, as the final act of giving form to the content rather than coming up with ideas and being a driving force behind it. It has been an experiment in what the role of a designer could be if you change perspective and tool kit. It has been a project which has allowed us as designers to be the ones who invite other disciplines in. Rather than just being asked to do a cover, or some titles or something, we have been pulling the strings, and deciding who will be the most suitable contributors for each project - which is unique as a designer, I think.

What do you think makes a "design driven publishing house" different from a "traditional" publishing house?

Traditionally the publishing houses has had the power of defining what quality is when it comes to publications of literature, photo books, artists books etc. Switching that role with someone who has a completely



different background and point of view is, to me, interesting in itself. You get new perspectives, and new possibilities of expression and to utilize the system that's already there in new ways. Traditionally, there are so many routines you have to go through in a publishing process - both editorial stuff, but also the actual process of publishing. All the stages it has to go through: editing, typesetting, proof reading, ragging, all that stuff. And on top of that there's things like Bokbasen, guidelines from the industry, unions and associations such as DnF etc. By not being a part of all that, since we are, to use your term - a design driven publishing house - it gives us a different set of possibilities and mobility relating to all of this. We don't

William Stormdal

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nels - because we're not aiming for traditional book stores like Ark, or Norli - that's not really where designers get their fix.

Would you say that you make publications specifically for designers?

I would say that we primarily make experimental publications. The field of impact for those publications isn't necessarily exclusively for designers. We orient towards the art and culture segment. Our publications tend to come out of some sort of design process though, or at least an ideation coming from the world of design. I would say that we make experimental publications with and for artists, designers, photographers, illustrators, and basically everything that surrounds the design industry.

What are your different roles in Pseudonym and how do you relate to them when working with publications?

It's exciting, because we have set up this constellation which doesn't really exist, so the roles has to be filled along the way. Like, I'm editor-in-chief at Pseudonym, but I'm not really an editor - I'm a designer, at least primarily. So, that's a role I had to grow into - simply because someone needed to oversee all the moving parts.

have to use the conventional chan- At the same time it's a very interesting process, because all the content I deal with is essentially about form, in my eyes. So when I get a text from a writer, I instinctively think about how that text will look like, rather than reading the text, as text. So the backbone of the work I do with the text deals with form, unlike a traditional editor who would focus on the content. And this mush of contradictions is exciting, and I think it contributes to the publications experimental nature.

> Many of the projects we've done is really about the process of making a publication. Such as the Interlogue-books which is a project where we invite a writer and a photographer to collaborate. I've facilitated it, but there is someone who creates the text, and someone who makes imagery, and then I've got to wind everything together in some form of design. So I think the editor role is quite illusive, and changes a lot based on the project and who we're working with. But essentially there's not much difference in being a designer and editor at Pseudonym; it's mostly the fact that I also have to wear my grown-up-pants from time to time.

> > continues on the next page →

36 **Expert Interview** 

William Stormdal

How has the process of collaborating with other artists been like?

everyone involved. We've mostly worked with people that operate in the same field as the publications live in, so they are used to working in a loose framework and doing things because it sounds fun and not to get rich off of it.

I guess Interlogue is the most relevant thing to talk about when it comes to collaborators, and I think the process has been very interesting in part because of the loose framework. Each of the contributors have one week to deliver a response to the last contribution. But the process of creating, writing, selecting or finding something from an archive which fits can't always be so time specific as to be done in one week. Basically, the project should take 20 weeks, but I don't think it's ever taken any less than 8 months. So it's almost always taking twice as long as it should, but I think this as been interesting to the process. The contributors don't know who the other person is, so that insecurity and slowness in the process contributes to the conversation in a way. Interpersonal relations and conversations require high tempo at some times and pause and contemplation at other times, so it's basically an organic extension of the concept, I think.

What role does digital media play in your publishing practice?

I think it has been very rewarding for We are completely dependent on using social media, since we're not a traditional publishing house with purchase schemes and stuff like that. Our titles don't come out it in the conventional channels, so social media is very important to us. The group of people we orient towards are more likely to shop elsewhere from the traditional book shops. And even though we've sold a decent amount of books through specialist book stores, we definitely have the most sales via internet - our webstore and Instagram.

> Have you ever published something in a purely digital format?

When corona came, we talked about wether Interlogue IV should be a printed book, or if we should do it digitally. We've also discussed that the whole idea behind Interlogue might as well be done digitally a bit like you did with your photo book. Could we apply the concept in an exciting, open form? Could we make the process available for anyone interested in interacting?

But there are some natural constraints regarding expenses. The cost of setting up a system like this and maintaining it, unless you possess all the knowledge yourself, can be massive. Say a print run of 37 **Expert Interview** 

William Stormdal

Interlogue cost around 15 000 NOK on average, and to translate that into hours for a developer making a digital product that should be on par really comparable, unless you have a friend who can do it because it's fun. Realistically, it's not possible.

And our costs on design is of course low since we do everything ourselves. If we had to pay for design services Pseudonym wouldn't be sustainable.

Anyway, I think all digital extensions of what we do are very interesting. Me and Halvor are both into type design, and we have talked about coming together to make a low threshold type foundry for non-commercial type designers. And down the line I think this would be a natural extension of Pseudnoym, since we're designers and have the possibility to expand our offer with what we make, whether that's books, merchandise, or typefaces.

When would you say that something would go from being a publishing house to being something completely different?

We are already in an outlier kind of position, and we're interested in changing the rules of the game, so no one can say that Pseudonym Publishing can't publish typefaces. There's not really a limit to it, as long as it's something we spend our own money and spare time to pursuit.

Do you think this expanded notion of a publishing house is something we will see more of in the future?

with what we do physically? It's not I hope so! A thing I've seen in the US for a while, which is starting to come to Norway as well, are these book trailers. Like a film trailer for a book. it's these super vague clips that's supposed to be a visualization of the mood and the universe in the book, giving extra motivation for paying the 350 NOK for the publication. And then there's Gyldendal's "Instastory-book", which is both a physical book, but also exists as digital "stories" on Instagram. I don't think the big publishing houses have embodied it at all yet - but I think they realize that they have to expand their repertoire, both when it comes to promo but also the actual product. I think somehow we all have to think about making literature more available. And if they all end up bitter due to not selling their text books. it's their own fault/loss.

> What are your thoughts on the "bookobject", and how do you relate to it as a designer?

It's something I'm very intrigued with. I think it's worth saying that being a graphic designer today is super ambiguous, because you're supposed to cover everything from typography, book design, web design, animation and interaction design as

#### William Stormdal

well as customer relations and project management. I understand really well that people don't know what it means when I say I'm a graphic designer. But I think it's very interesting to challenge the physical role of the book, and especially when someone find it worth putting money into it. And they both [physical and digital media] deserve their place, and they both deserve to be challenged. There's not all book content that suits being digitized, and there's not all digital content that suits being printed.

There are so many projects we've done where at least all the designers agree that they shouldn't put money into printing something, but rather set up a simple website, or archive. The convention of putting stuff into a printed publication, whether its an annual report or whatever, is so embedded into our culture, so I think it's nice to poke at this notion. The experience from running a publishing practice is also valuable with clients, we can advice them, with authority, from printing unnecessary stuff and rather put the money where it makes a difference.

Its also a lot about communicating the content. Our experience from events and various editorial projects is that the majority of people quickly skim through the publication and then make up their mind wether they like it or not. There is this zoom-in-zoomout thing where every letter has their

place in the context of the book, but you also have to design it so that people think the cover is interesting enough to possibly read whatever is inside of it. So the relationship between communication and aesthetics can end up being a bit skewed. I think in some cases this can be easier to handle digitally – because the form of the book is so fixed.

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There's not all book content that Finally, any predictions for the future of suits being digitized, and there's publishing?

I think the future will be a lot more fragmented, because people will realize that the tools are becoming more and more available, and the processes are becoming, to use one of the worst terms I know, "lean". You don't have to get involved in a complicated publishing scheme, dealing with an editor and a project manager and everything involved. If you've been writing some poems on your iPhone you can just make a book. It's that easy. I think this is the main direction things will go, and we're already seing this now with a lot of small imprints by the bigger publishing houses. They are allowed to be more narrow and more flexible than their larger counterparts.

Hamburger Tee→
Psuedo 

(Pseudonym Publishing,
2020)





The initial research phase involved a lot of reading. On the following pages are some quotes from the reading I found especially interesting and relevant – and that has inspired this project.

What we are coming to realise is that no one thing can pick up where the book left off; instead it is everything, all of our networks, our services, our devices, the internet plus everything else, which will carry literature forward. Literature is unique among art forms in that it is enacted entirely in the minds of author and reader; a psychic dance. Literature is everything, and thus everything must be employed in its support. And publishers, so long accustomed to doing a couple of things well, are adrift in a world that needs them to do everything -- or GTFO.

James Bridle (2017)

[on the definition of "books"]

I think we are in a transitional period where these definitions are up for grabs. We are now able to call a broad range of things books. Every once in a while, one gets a glimpse of a future that is not so strongly tied to the past. Take electronic book readers, which emulate a two-dimensional book experience. To think that this is the future of reading would be a mistake. We are in a process of inventing the future by re-inventing the past. But the future is probably not going to look anything like that.

Bob Stein (2012, pp. 64)

[on defining digital literatur]

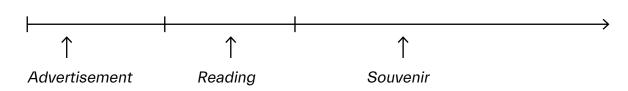
The first problem of definition is a problem that applies to all definitions: the placement of boundaries. The boundaries for digital literature are wide, much wider than for any other category in these particular awards. There is no uniform approach to digital literature: no form, no medium, no genre, not even a consistent means for navigating through a story. This can be a strength (wow, digital literature can be almost anything) or a weakness (ugh, digital literature can be almost anything), depending on the tone of your voice.

Simon Groth (2018)

One major consequence of the shift to digital is the addition of graphical, audio and video elements to the written word. More profound, however, is the book's reinvention in a networked environment. Unlike the printed book, the networked book is not bound by time or space. It is an evolving entity within an ecology of readers, authors and texts. Unlke the printed book, the networked book is never finished: it is always a work in progress.

Institute for the Future of the Book (n.d.)

Life / Use of the Book:



James Bridle (2010)

Since the 18th century, the book has been defined as "an assemblage of pages bearing signs (wether handwritten or printed) destined to be read," and thus seems, by definition, to be indistinguishable from its medium. By contrast, the digital object is based upon a dissociation between hardware and software. Consequently, one might ask wether the digital book will be defined as embracing certain technical aspects it would be meet to reconcile (to restrict even) to the specificities of the benchmark model, the printed book. It is thus qualified as "a work where the content can be read in the form of a digital file that reproduces some of the characteristics of a paper book, adapted to active reading on a screen; a book that exists in digital form, either because it is the digitized copy of a book printed on paper, or because it was created by means of a computer".

Lucile Haute (2019, p. 78)

When one writes electronically, for example using a computer to write onto a disk, a virtually infinite pad of paper, on is still creating a series of lines. However, these lines are no longer univocal; they have become plastic, malleable, manipulable. One can twist them, break them, open windows and make them run backwards. They move along the screen. Moreover, the movement on the screen is the very process of creativity. The movement is a result of the processing of thought and language. The text that appears on the screen is no longer the mere result of creativity (as is the case of text on paper), it is creativity itself.

- Vilem Flusser, 1987 (2019, p. 62)
- [...] the web was conceived as a variation of the word processor a distributed network of linear documents connected by a layer of hyperlinks. It stands to reason, then, that everything we have at our disposal today is somehow a result of this initial vision, that every site we design, every experience we create is an extension of the document-centric approach. This is why text elements are the foundation of HTML and why everything else tables, CSS for layout, video, plugins are merely extensions in response to demand. If we consider the Web as it was initially envisioned, it's not surprising that we've found it so easy to use page to unwittingly define our own boundaries.
- Dan Rubin (2019, p. 35)

# Modules

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The following section deals with the seven modules modules in this diploma. They are laid out chronologically; I was always informed with new knowledge and skills throughout the process, which helped shape the subsequent modules.

↓ Movable type is another modular system.



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Digital and physical media both have a set of intrinsic qualities. This project was an exploration of transformation of qualities from one medium to another, which resulted in a digital zine.

#### Themes:

- o Material qualities of digital media
- o Material qualities of physical media
- o User Input

#### Result:

- o A digital, interactive zine in the form of a website
- o A handmade, printed documentation

#### Visit:

https://digitaldecay.backendbooks.no



Digital Decay 48

#### Introduction

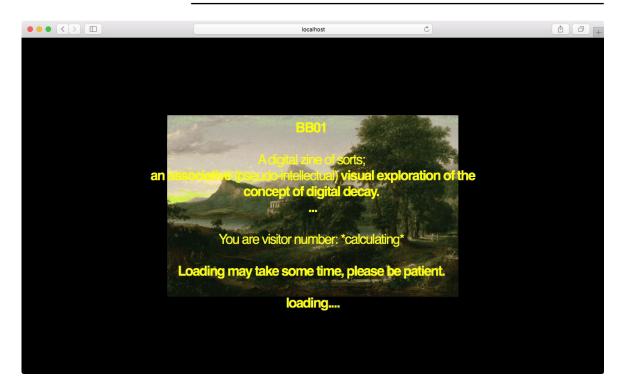
The basis for the project came from initial research on the material qualities of digital and physical media. I was fascinated by the impermanence of physical media; how every time you handle an object you inevitably leave some form of trace. Over time books and other printed media will attain a patina that tells a story. The yellowing of the pages, the markings of dog ears, spots, stains and scribbles can all contribute to the sentimental value of the book object. Digital files and artifacts are in no way permanent by default either, but their decay manifests in other, often less tangible manners. In this project I wanted to materialize this notion of decay in a digital publication. I wanted to make a digital product that would deteriorate visually over time, and explore the concept of leaving traces.

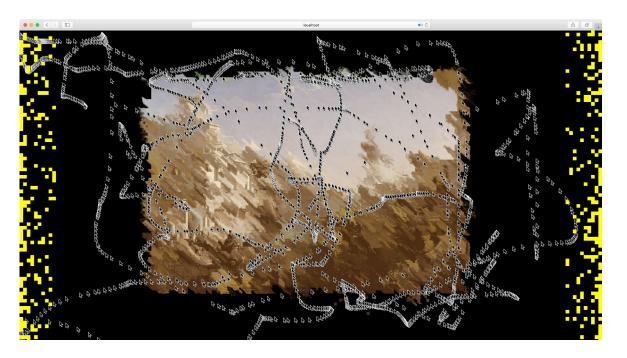
#### Summary

The final outcome is a digital zine in the form of a website.

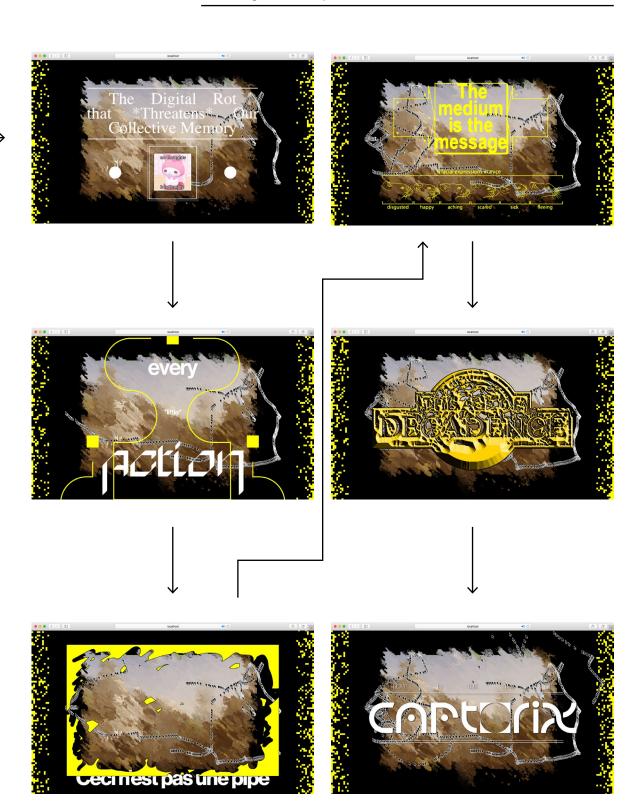
The content is the result of an associative exploration of the theme, set to the backdrop of a painting by Thomas Cole. All the cursor-movements on the website are tracked, stored and visualized. This data is then used to distort and manipulate the backdrop painting, eventually leaving it illegible.

49 Digital Decay









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#### Theme

What is digital decay and how does it differentiate from physical decay? Digital decay is not a term that refers to a specific phenomena; I'm using it in this context as an umbrella term for any form of decay that happens in a digital context. The decay of digital files might in some cases lead to visually interesting artifacts, but most often it will simply render the digital files obsolete or unreadable.

I started exploring ways of manifesting this decay visually and looked for inspiration online. I found some conceptual and visual similarities across the references, with keywords such as pixelation, scattering, distortion and scaling. Fig.1-4

#### Interaction

I looked into various ways of translating the concept of digital decay into something interactive. I looked into ways of the website slowly "breaking" solely based on the amount of visitors, but this seemed to fall short as an analog of physical decay. There needed to be some sort of cause → effect based on user input, so that the decay would be a direct result of how the users interacted with the website. I implementet this by "recording" all the cursor movements from the websites visitors, and use this to draw a displacement map that would be invisible to the users, but that the content on the page would respond to.

Since this interaction wouldn't be visible for the users, I wanted to add a feature that implies that something is happening. I also wanted to somehow visualize the movements / traces I recorded from the users. I explored various ways of doing this, such as drawing out the points using lines, circles or different brushes. In the end I was inspired by an old windows glitch, where dragging a window around would leave trails of the same window behind it Fig. 2. I implemented this using the cursor, so every movement would leave a trail of cursors – also implying an irreversible action.

Fig. 1 (top):

Illustration of data degration in digital images.

Jim Salter / CC-BY-4.0

Fig. 2 (middle top):

A glitch from Windows XP.

Fig. 3 (middle bottom):

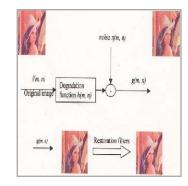
A model for restoration of degraded images (Siddaraju & Gururaju, 2015)

Fig. 4 (bottom):

Datamoshing / datacorrupting of a digital video file.









Digital Decay

#### Content

I wanted to wrap this interaction in some form of digital publication. For me, the most important aspect of this project was the concept; the fact that it could live over time, eventually getting more and more deteriorated, but to tie everything together as a product and experience I needed to make some content that would add to the feeling of this being a publication. Since I'm not a writer it was natural to mainly work with the content visually.

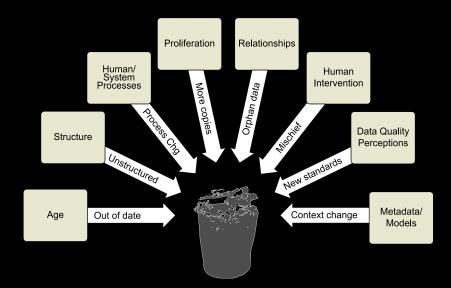
I wanted to draw inspiriation directly from zine culture as it suited this project well; thematically – exploring the quite niche theme and concept of digital decay, as well as allowing me to further use the project as a visual exercise. I wanted to maintain some of the experiential qualities of the physical medium. A big part of the zine culture is the rawness of the content, the inexpensive materials and production methods, and often experimental and expressive aeshteics.

I started to create content for the zine by freely associating over the theme, both appropriating content I had already come across during my research as well as creating original content. The process revolved around creating, appropriating and juxtaposing somewhat obscure content, draped in a layer of irony/humor, which is why I ended up calling it an "associative, pseudo-intellectual digital zine".

- → Visual inspiration from older zines
- → → (next spread) content for the digital zine

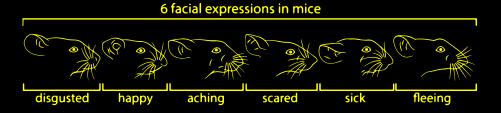


Obscure data degredation schematics



McLuhan juxtaposed with some mice. In this project I would say that the medium is the message. Possibly.



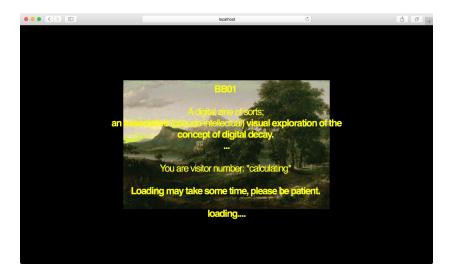


Oneohtrix Point Never (electronic music artist), David Rudnick (graphic designer) and Michel Houllebecq (writer). Both the song *Love in the Time of Lexapro* and Houllebecq's *Serotonin* deals with the theme of decay. Also, if you're up to speed on these references it means you are a cool person...

LOVE IN THE TIME OF

Just a friendly reminder... No other references here...





#### Aesthetical choices

The first thing you see when opening the website is a landing page. This functions as an introduction and a digital "cover". It briefly explains what the website is and sets the mood of the zine. It also tells you how many people have read the zine before you, hinting towards the conceptual nature of the project. I used a black background for the whole zine as an analogy for raw paper – a black/blank screen is unlit in the same way white/blank paper is unprinted. I used a tightly kerned Helvetica Bold for the typography, inspired by the look of low quality print with color bleeding. I chose a bright yellow color for the typography, in stark contrast to the black background.

Both the landing page and the zine itself is complimented by a backdrop. These are paintings from the series *The Course of Empire* by Thomas Cole, which deals with the theme of decay and decadence in civilizations. The painting seen on the landing page is the second in the series, *The Arcadian or Pastoral State*, which represents the ideal state. Inside the zine you can find *The Consummation of Empire*, the third painting. This describes the peak of the empire, just before its downfall. This is also the visual motif that will decay over time after readers have interacted with the zine.



The Consumation of Empire from The Course of Empire, Thomas Cole (1836)

I placed the content in a single, scrolling page with all the illustrations in one column – allowing the user to scroll through the content as quickly as they want, getting both the vibe and an overview of the whole thing.

In translating from a physical medium to a digital one, I wanted to further utilize some of the interactive and dynamic possibilities of the digital media. Using JavaScript, I created a decorative border on each side of the screen. The borders are generated randomly with each visitor, and then animated procedurally. It is a grid of cells scrolling along with the content, with certain cells swapping positions at random times. This animation gets progressively faster and more apparent, also referencing the theme and the conept.

I wanted to implement audio as well, to contribute to the immersiveness of the website. I downloaded a public domain "muzak" track and down-sampled it, reducing the quality of the audio. Quite decadent

Digital Decay 60 61 Digital Decay

#### How it works

The main resources I've used for this project are Google Firebase – for storing data, and p5.js – for all the graphics processing. While the user is reading the introduction on the landing page, the website does a lot of processing, getting the actual zine ready for viewing. It fetches all the data left behind by previous readers, more specifically all the recorded mousepositions, and draws a displacement map using those coordinates. All the coordinates are stored relative to the window size, so it's responsive to all screen dimensions. Each point is drawn as a very translucent white circle on a black background.

The motif, the painting by Thomas Cole, is then placed on a black canvas. The algorithm iterates over the pixels in the canvas, and looks up the brightness value of the same position in the displacement map. The higher brightness value, the more it will displace and distort the image. It's doing this by copying a small square around the current pixel, then pasting it several times with slight offsets in size and position. This is what creates the glitchy and distorted effect.

While the reader has the zine open, and a mousemove-event is fired, the current mouseposition is stored in an array. When the reader eventually closes the tab or window, this array is uploaded to the Firebase database, ready to be processed the next time someone visits the website.

As a way for me to get some knowledge into the user interactions, I also stored how much each user scrolled on the website – allowing me to see how much of the zine they actually "read". As the database grows, the visual processing will also gradually take more and more time. Though this wasn't an intented effect, it fits quite nicely into the concept. Eventually the database will be so big that most computers/browsers won't be able to handle the request in a reasonable amount of time, rendering the whole website/zine obsolete...

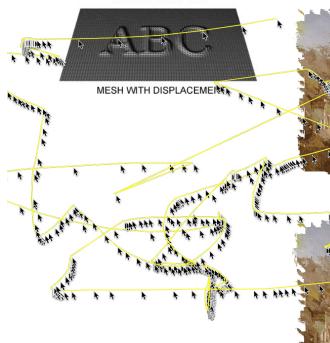


ORIGINAL MESH





DISPLACEMENT MAP





Displacement map illustration by T-tuts / CC-BY-2.0

Fig. 2-5 (right column):

the database.

Progression of decay in the motif

Fig. 6 (overlay):

Visualization of cursor traces stored in



#### Reflections

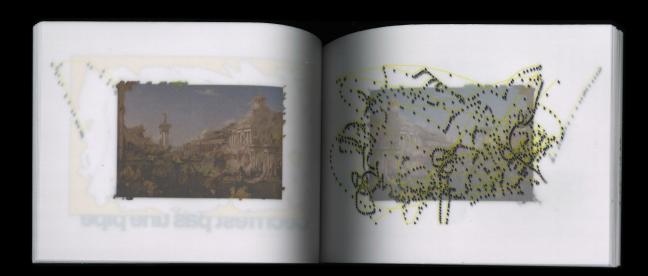
Coming out of this module I had a set of experiences that was very helpful on the way forward. One of the biggest takeaways from this project was the ability to dynamically store and retrieve data from visitors. Using the Database-as-a-Service that Google Firebase provides was a very managable way for me, with my limited programming knowledge, to do this.

Building skills, tools and knowledge in this way is an important part of how I work as a designer, and having this as a part of my current toolkit is extremely valuable for me. I also learned a lot about implementing solid websites. I tried my best to make the website responsive to all devices and screensizes, and with as little bugs as possible. Though it's not 100% watertight, I managed to get it to a level that was satisfactory for a project of this size and scope.

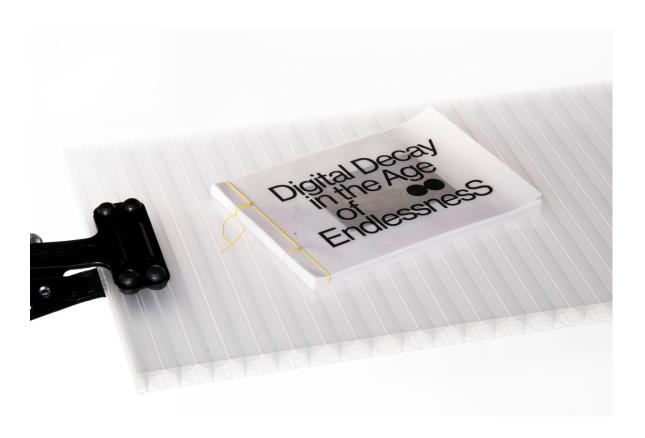
On a broader level it was a good exercise in working with concepts and transforming qualities from one medium to another. After going public with the website I could get user feedback both from the data the users left behind, as well as talking to people who visited it. My general impression was that most found it interesting visually, but that the theme and concept was too abstract - at least for the users coming into it without a clear idea of the underlying concept. Nevertheless, it was an interesting process with very valuable outcome.

As a documentation of the project I printed a small book, portraying the decay of the motif along with the traces left behind by the users. I printed it on tracing paper, a fragile and semi translucent material, and hand sewed the pages together using a japanese binding technique. This resulted in a small and fragile book, that will easily deteriorate if not handed carefully.

# Digital Decay in the Age of EndlessnesS









66

Written text is traditionally considered static - but digital media allows for text to be dynamic and malleable. This was an exploration of text as interactive content, resulting in a short story with a special interactive feature.

#### Themes:

- o Material qualities of digital/physical media
- o Online social behavior
- o Text as interactive content
- o Interaction as narrative device

#### Result:

o An interactive short story

#### Visit:

https://vellum.backendbooks.no



Vellum 68

#### Introduction

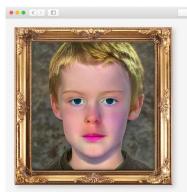
In this project I wanted to work with text as an interactive element. I wanted to create a text that was somehow plastic and moldable, and where all the individual user interactions would accumulate over time. In this manner it would also be a social experiment, seeing how users would behave with a material they could alter in some way.

Since this would be a text-based project, I was eager to collaborate with a writer. I wanted to see how a writer could be involved in an experimental publication like this, and how the creative process would end up looking like. Truls Bauer is a writer and comedian currently doing a master's degree in screenwriting. He contributed to the project with a brilliant short story called *Vellum*.

#### Summary

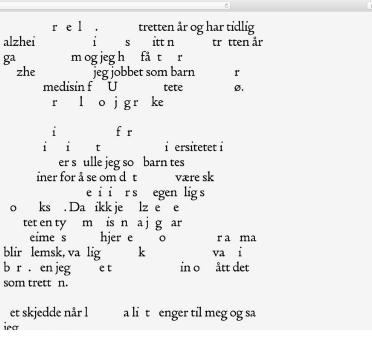
The result is a website/publication for the short story *Vellum* by Truls Bauer. The text is about a thirteen year old boy with early on-set alzheimers. The digital publication is a conceptual interpretation of the text, using possibilites of digital media to convey the theme and the feeling of the text. It features an interaction where touching (as in moving the mouse cursor over (or tapping, on touch displays)) the letters of the text will make them fade away.

69 Vellum



#### Vellum

Truls Bauer



70 71 Vellum Vellum

### The website after 0 ( $\downarrow\downarrow\downarrow$ ), 5 ( $\downarrow\downarrow$ ) and 15 ( $\downarrow$ ) visitors



# Vellum Truls Bauer

Jeg heter Vellum. Jeg er tretten år og har tidlig alzheimers. Bor i Tromsø. Mitt navn er tretten år gamle Vellum og jeg har fått for tidlig alzheimers for jeg jobbet som barnetester av voksenmedisin for Universitetet i Tromsø. Jeg heter Vellum og jeg røyker ikke og jeg sigger ikke. I 2019 når jeg var tolv år gammel fikk jeg min første jobb ved forskningsinstituttet på Universitetet i Tromsø. Der skulle jeg som barn teste voksnes medisiner for å se om det kunne være skadelig for barn å få medisiner som egentlig skal være for voksne. Da fikk jeg alzheimer når jeg testet en type medisin da jeg var tretten år. Alzheimers er en hjernesykdom som gjør at man blir glemsk, vanlig for voksne og ikke vanlig i barn. Men jeg hadde testet medisin og fått det som tretten.

Det skjedde når legen ga litt penger til meg og sa jeg kunne prøve litt medisin for voksen. Selv om det var barn, het Vellum. Når de fortalte til meg etternå at ieg dessverre hadde blitt nåvist med



# Vellum Truls Bauer

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medisiner som egentlig skal være for voksne. Da fikk jeg alzheimer når jeg testet en ty medisin da jeg var tretten år. Alzheimers hjernesykdom som gjør at man blir glemsk, vanlig for voksne og ikke vanlig i barn. Men jeg hadde testet isin og fått det som tretten.

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Vellum

Truls Bauer

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og je min første jobb ved forskningsinstituttet på Universitetet i Tromsø. Der skulle jeg som barn teste voksnes medisiner for å se om det kunne være skadelig

medisiner som egentlig skal være for voksne. Da fikk jeg alzheimer når jeg testet en ty medisin da jeg var tretten år. Alzheimers hjernesykdom som gjør at man blir glemsk, vanlig for voksne og ikke vanlig i barn. Men jeg

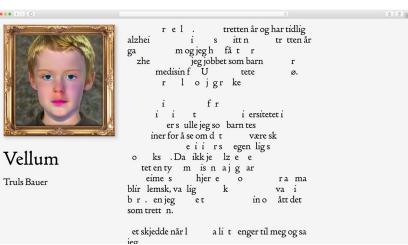
hadde testet isin og fått det som tretten.

et skjedde når legen ga litt penger til meg og sa Vellum.

The website after 20 ( $\downarrow\downarrow\downarrow$ ), 25 ( $\downarrow\downarrow$ ) and 50 ( $\downarrow$ ) visitors

tretten år og har tidlig Jeg heter e 1 . alzheim s o i s itt n tr tten år gamle Vell m og jeg h få t r i li a zhe ers for jeg jobbet som barnetester av vo senmedisin f U versitetet i omsø. r lojgrke ogje i i t i ersitetet i Tromsø. Der s ulle jeg so barn teste sne edisiner for å se om d tk nne være skadelig e i i r so egen lig skal være fo Vellum ks .Da ikk je lz e er n jeg te tet en ty m is n aj g artre te r. eime s hjer e om som gj ra ma blir lemsk, Truls Bauer va lig for voksne va i br. en jeg adde testet isin o ått det som tretten.

et skjedde når leg n a li t enger til meg og sa





Truls Bauer



Vellum

# Inspiration

I wanted to reiterate some of the concepts from the previous module. I was eager to contiue exploring the concept of impermanence in digital media, but manifest this in a more direct and interactive way. I discussed the idea with Truls and invited him to interpret the theme in his own way, with full creative freedom. A few days later he sent me back the text, *Vellum*. The text is humorous and a bit absurd, interpreting the theme in an unexpected way.



The text has an eerie and uncanny feeling to it. There's a clear dichotomy between the narrator, Vellum, and the narrative. At the same time theres something nostalgic over it, pointing to a time gone by. I wanted to incorporate these qualities in the experience of the digital publication.

The main interaction came quite naturally as a response to this; the letters slowly fading away, permanently leaving gaps in the text as a metaphor for memory loss. Working with timing and getting the animation right was important for conveying the right feeling.

I also wanted to compliment the text with imagery that would strengthen the atmosphere I was going for. I didn't want to use an actual image of a 13 year old boy, due to privacy reasons. Instead I used the website Artbreeder.com, where you can generate images using AI. The current AI technology is capable of creating very realistic looking portraits, but it will also often create subtle artifacts giving it a look that is somehow very "off". I generated four portrait photos of Vellum – a boy that doesn't exist. To take the uncannyness even further, I added a function that swaps the portrait of Vellum when the reader is scrolling, possibly without them noticing.

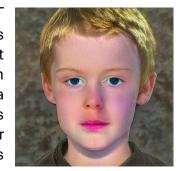








Fig. 1 -4:
Al generated portrait photos

# THE DOVES TYPE®

Robert Green's facsimile of the famous Doves Press typeface, a digital reconstruction devised using the original metal type salvaged in 2014 from London's River Thames.

When chosing typography for this project I wanted something that had the same nostalgic quality as the text and the imagery. An old style serif typeface seemed suitable, but even better would be a font with a strange, forgotten history. The Doves Type is a revival typeface by Robert Green, reconstructed from the early 20th century Doves Roman typeface. The Doves Roman typeface was a specially devised metal type exclusively used for the books from the Doves Press. After a dispute between the partners of the press, the type was thrown in the river Thames. It was gone and forgotten for almost 100 years, until 2014 when Robert Green salvaged pieces from the original metal type from the Thames, and created this revival version.

→ On the next spread you will find the text along with visual inspiration for the publication.

# Vellum

# By Truls Bauer

Jeg heter Vellum. Jeg er tretten år og har tidlig alzheimers. Bor i Tromsø. Mitt navn er tretten år gamle Vellum og jeg har fått for tidlig alzheimers for jeg jobbet som barnetester av voksenmedisin for Universitetet i Tromsø. Jeg heter Vellum og jeg røyker ikke og jeg sigger ikke. I 2019 når jeg var tolv år gammel fikk jeg min første jobb ved forskningsinstituttet på Universitetet i Tromsø. Der skulle jeg som barn teste voksnes medisiner for å se om det kunne være skadelig for barn å få medisiner som egentlig skal være for voksne. Da fikk jeg alzheimer når jeg testet en type medisin da jeg var tretten år. Alzheimers er en hjernesykdom som gjør at man blir glemsk, vanlig for voksne og ikke vanlig i barn. Men jeg hadde testet medisin og fått det som tretten.

Det skjedde når legen ga litt penger til meg og sa jeg kunne prøve litt medisin for voksen. Selv om det var barn, het Vellum. Når de fortalte til meg etterpå at jeg dessverre hadde blitt påvist med tidlig Alzheimer, en hjernesykdom som var vanlig for voksne og ikke for tretten år gutt mistet forstanden av meg. Gått helt glipp!

Dagen var min nabotante Milles femtiårsdag, men jeg var på Universitetet i Tromsø sin forskningslab. Alt jeg ville der var å spørre legen hva som var vanlig kropptykke for en tretten år gutt. Nei, nei. Dagene, de dras fra meg. Jeg husker det kalde regnet på skjorteryggen en mainatt når Sophia Manthey skrev sine brev til meg. På bordkortet mitt hadde Sunniva Mono tegnet et lite hjerte med en pil gjennom. Hun hadde hjulpet mor med forberedelsene og den myke omtanken hun viste gjorde noe med meg.

Jeg er kun tretten år og mitt navn er Vellum, men det Sonja gjorde tok frem dyret i meg. Jeg ble vill i min pupill - ville ha hun som var så snill! Mot min mor, min mor, min matede mor. Tretten år gutt ble sugen på Sopranos Mambo, men hun var reist. I alle sine dager hadde hullene i tennene mine grodd til store plugger. Tenner i tennene mine. Jeg glemmer røykpakken på rema 1000. Hadde store planer: skulle lage dokumentar om USA. Nei, Vellums trettne gutteår: full av sykdommen Alzheimer. En sykdom for voksne, feilplassert i unge gutten Vellum. Nabotante Mille hadde laget sin melonpostei med små biter, men var et annet sted. Jeg var Vellum, tretten år med Alzheimers.

Dagene drar fra meg.

oto: Wayne Lougee











# Evelyn Couter's Memoirs

I've started my memoirs many times but can't seem to finish them. I'm determined that before I die I'll write everything I can remember. Please excuse the mistakes but I'll just go on, hoping I can let you, my children, grandchildren, greatgrandchildren and whoever is interested read my somewhat boring life. Nothing will be in sequence but I'll try to give you some idea of the years or you can use your imagination.

I, Evelyn Marie Wilson, was born to Fannie Elizabeth Bender Wilson and William Ward Wilson at Allegany Hospital, Baltimore Avenue, Cumberland MD, Allegany County. The date was January 5<sup>th</sup> 1929. Mom was 22 years old and Daddy was 35.

The day was freezing rain, sleet so daddy went next door to our neighbor's to get sweet dear Hilda Funkhauser (no, that's a real name) to keep my sister's Hilda Elizabeth age2 and Virginia Grace, aged 4.

Thankfully we (they) has a car and by the time we got to the hospital, I was well on my way to being born. In fact, I was almost born in the elevator. I weighed in at nine pounds and several ounces. The doctor was Dr. Reynold's and his nurse who was his girlfriend (he married her soon after I was born) Evelyn Curd was so smitten by me she threatened to kidnap me because I was so precious. I was named for her because she made such a fuss over me.

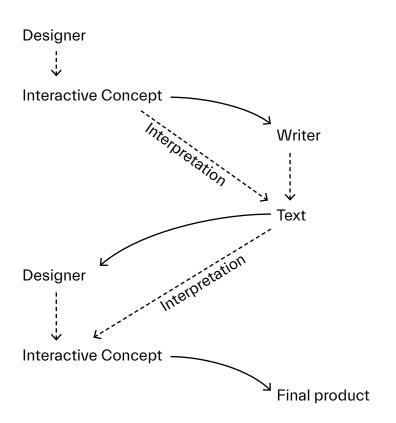


Vellum

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### **Process**

The process of working on this publication with a writer was very interesting and fruitful. It started with an idea of some sort of interactive concept which I explained to the writer. He interpreted this his own way and wrote the text, which I then would interpret again and built the final interaction and the aesthetics around this text. The diagram below illstrates the unusual process/dialogue between the writer and the designer.



### How it works

To make this work I had to learn how to treat strings (text) properly with JavaScript. I used a library called splitting.js, which makes working with individual characters or words in an HTML text much easier. I keep the text content stored on a Firebase Database, and fetch it into the browser on loading. I split the string into individual characters, and for each character I add an event listener for the "mouseover" event. If the event fires, an HTML-class is added to the target element. This contains some CSS with a transition that will cause the fade animation to trigger. When closing the tab or window an updated version of the text is saved to the database. Before uploading the text, the algorithm runs through all the characters of the string, checking if they have been "touched" by the current user. If so, that character is marked so that the next time someone opens the website, it will only appear as a gap in the text.

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Vellum 78 79 Vellum

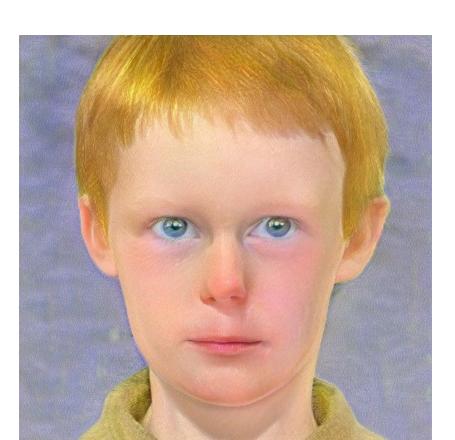
# Reflections

After talking with people who tried the website, it felt quite succesful in being engaging in its interactivity.

"I was very scared to move around on the page, in fear of ruining everything!", one of the visitors told me. It was also interesting to see how long it took before the text became illegible. It appeared that in the beginning most users were very careful, only touching a letter here and there, until someone basically destroyed an entire paragraph. After this point it quickly became unreadable, which also seemed to reduce the amount of engagement.

A possibility with a concept like this is to provide some sort of exclusivity. By having an impermanent content like this, only the first users will be able to read the text in its entirety possibly creating engagement and suspense.

If I would have gone further with this project it would have been interesting to play around more with this balance of impermanence and consequences of user interactions.



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Based on the essay *Our Book* by El Lissitzky, this project was an exploration of generative expressions, aiming to demonstrate possibilities of digital media as well as visualizing aspects of our contemporary visual culture.

### Themes:

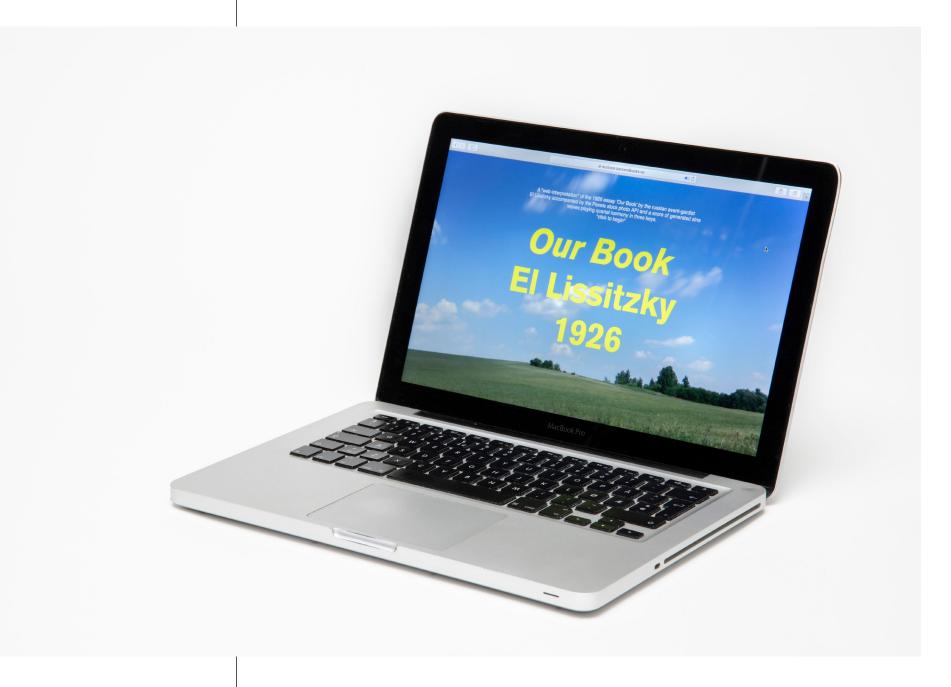
- o Generative expressions
- o API as content provider
- o Contemprorary Visual Culture

# Result:

- o A digital version of the essay Our Book by El Lissitzky
- o A printed, illustrated version of the essay

# Visit:

https://ourbook.backendbooks.no



El Lissitzky's future visions of the book has been an inspiration throughout this project. In his 1926 essay *Our Book* he deals with the representational problem of the book.

[...] as long as the book is of necessity a handheld object, that is to say, not yet supplanted by sound recordings or talking pictures, we must wait from day to day for new fundamental inventions in the field of book production, so that here also we may reach the standard of the time.

[...]

The hieroglyph is international: that is to say, if a Russian, a German, or an American impresses the symbols (pictures) of the ideas on his memory, he can read Chinese or Egyptian (silently), without acquiring a knowledge of the language, for language and writing are each patterns in themselves. This is an advantage that the letter book has lost. So I believe that the next book form will be plastic-representational.

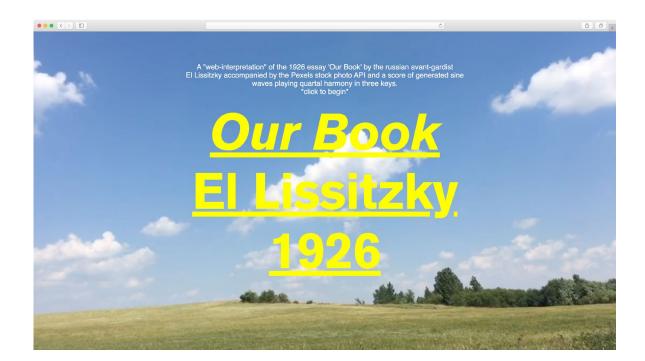
### We can say that:

- (1) the hieroglyph book is international (at least in its potentiality),
- (2) the letter book is national, and
- (3) the coming book will be a-national: for in order to understand it, one must at least learn.

Today we have two dimensions for the word. As a sound it is a function of time, and as a representation it is a function of space. The coming book must be both.

El Lissitzky (Armstrong, 2009, pp. 26)

These are some outtakes of the text that inspired this project. I wanted to use the text as a foundation and visualize some of the technological advancements that has happened since the text was written, opening up for a lot of the possibilities mentioned. I also wanted to approach the text with a critical view, as I found some of the passages slightly naive (seen with a 2020 lens at least). Taking some of Lissitzky's predictions literally, I wanted my version to a) be a "function of time" b) be "supplanted by sound recordings" c) use imagery as representation of meaning.



# Summary

The result is a "web-interpretation" of the essay *Our Book*, which uses a stock photo API to illustrate every word of the text (excerpt). It utilizes text, image, video, audio and time as devices to create a uniquely digital experience.



# Image

We live in a world where we are constantly blasted with imagery. And a not-so-small part of these images are stock photos. I thought it could be interesting to think of a stock photo library as a pictographic writing system. This is in a sense also how it is used and constructed; each image is supposed to be a universal representation of an idea.

I wanted to translate the original text into this pictographic writing system. There are many free, online socalled microstock photo librarys. Pexels.com is one of them, which also has a free, open API. By using the API I could feed the text through it word by word, thus translating each word into an image.

In order to make the publication a "function of time", the website displays each word/image sequentially – like an animation. I wanted to highlight the connection between word and image so I placed those center stage, with the word overlapping the image.



### Sound

As Lissitzky calls for, I wanted the text to be supplanted by sound. I was eager to create something truly dynamic; a unique composition that's generated each time the website loads. I have experience with playing and composing music, so it made sense to utilize this skill in the project as well. I used JavaScript and the Audio API that's built in to most modern browser to accomplish this.

The framework for the composition is a set of notes that will trigger along with the text and images. The set of notes is divided into three subsets in different keys, each containing notes that are a perfect fourth appart. I utilized quartal harmony because it has an ambiguous sound, without a clear tonal centre. The composition will modulate between the three keys at random times, taking unexpected turns and keeping the tune interesting. I used simple sine wave generators to play the notes. The resulting piece is technological and almost robotic in its appearance.

Every



invention



in



art



is



а



single



event



in



time



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### **Aesthetics**

The website is built as a single page / screen, without any navigation or scrolling. All the content is therefore present in the frame, but stacked on top of eachother in layers. I wanted the main focus to be the connection between the image and the word, so the word is set in a big and bold font, in the center of the screen.

Though this web-essay isn't intended to be read like a traditional text, I wanted to show each image/word in the context of the full text – so as a new word is revealed it is added to the running text, set in a smaller, white type spanning three columns underneath the highlighted word.

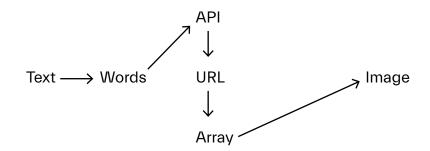
I also wanted to include something dynamic for the background. A single color or a static image would be too paper/print-like for this concept, but it couldn't be too dynamic either as that might distract from the main area of focus. I used the same stock photo library to find a calm video of a green hill in front of a blue sky; a subtle reference to a certain windows wallpaper we all know.

As a humorous critique of Lissitzky's statement on hieroglyphic scripts (written chinese is not a pictographic nor a hieroglyphic writing system), I added "subtitles" set in the familiar dingbat font *Wingdings*.



#### How it works

Initially I took the whole text string from the essay, and split into a set of words. I then used each word as a search term for the photo API and got an image in return. Due to the restrictions of the free API version I couldn't send a request for each word, each time the page was loaded. Instead I fetched all the images beforehand, and stored the URL's in an array. The algorithm on the website cycles through the text word by word, and simultaneously through the URL array, replacing the image to match the current word. The amount of time each word is displayed is calculated from how many letters the word contains. However, the overall tempo is gradually increasing throughout the text.



Reflections

As a case study I think the most interesting part of this project was the collection of images that came out of it. It left me with questions I would have liked to examine further if I had the time; what would the images look like if I used another text? What would the images look like if I used a different stock photo library? How would someone interpret these images if they were presented in a different context?

I think stock photos are very interesting as a representation of visual culture. If we were to interpret our society through the collection of images from this project, we would be living in a world of vibrant colors, beautiful people and with technology and nature in perfect harmony. Stock photos have this mandate of being universally representational, which I think it almost never is.

On a technical level I learned more about working with API's, which I only had a little experience with going into the project. It was interesting to work with content in this manner, creating new expressions by appropriating and recontextualizing existing content.

The project was also an interesting study in delving into a text, and try to interpret and recontextualize it through different visual and conceptual devices.

As a documentation of the project, and an application of the concept in a printed context, I used all the images to create a static photo essay. I reused parts of the original code for the website to generate the print files automatically in InDesign (I used my knowledge from the upcoming "Game of Life" module to do this). The photo essay is a translation of the original essay – from text to image. See next spread for the result → →





PRESERVATION OF THE PRESER











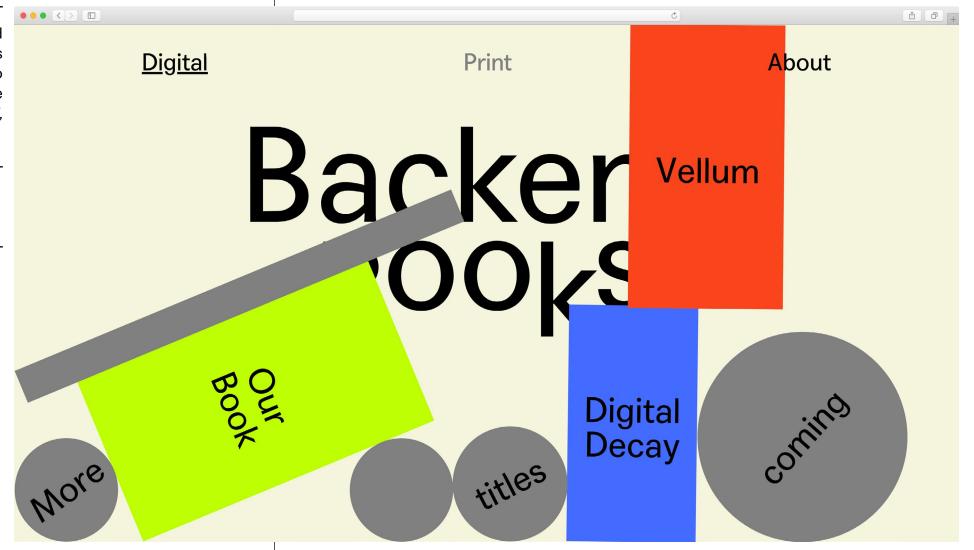


95

At this point I had done three online projects, and wanted some way of getting those out to the public. This was not a module in itself, but I still used it as an exercise to increase my knowledge and skills. I created a website for the fictional publishing practice "Backend Books", where I could publish the results of the modules.

Visit:

https://old.backendbooks.no



BackendBooks.no v.1 96

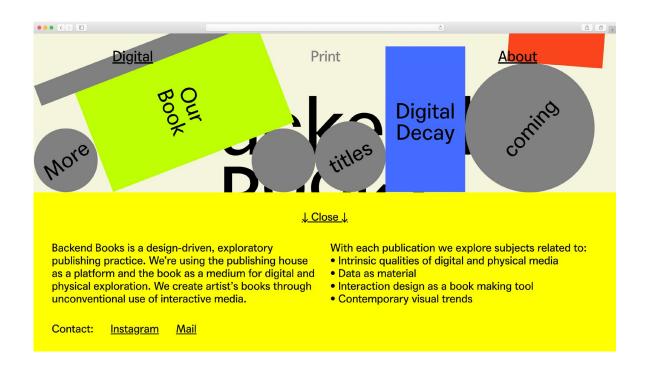
#### Introduction

I needed some way of publishing my projects, get people to interact with them, and also put them in a context where they made sense and had a connection to eachother. This was the basis for the website BackendBooks.no. The description of Backend Books at that point went like this:

Backend Books is a design-driven, exploratory publishing practice. We're using the publishing house as a platform and the book as a medium for digital and physical exploration. We create artist's books through unconventional use of interactive media.

- o With each publication we explore subjects related to:
- Intrinsic qualities of digital and physical media
- o Data as material
- o Interaction design as a book making tool
- Contemporary visual trends

97 BackendBooks.no v.1



When building this website I wanted a look & feel that suited the experimental and playful nature of the projects. One way of looking at the modules is like smaller building blocks in my project as a whole. I translated this quite literally, by using the browser window as a container and placing "physical" boxes, representing the individual projects, inside it. (The boxes were also meant to allude towards books in size and shape). I used the JavaScript library matter.js to implented the physics, which allowed the users to drag them around and play with them. Now that I had a platform with all my projects I could easily share the website through social media and other channels.





I created an Instagram account for Backend Books as well, and used it to promote the website and the individual modules.

This was essential in getting the publications out there, and getting data and feedback from users.



# **Group Show**

101

100

This project was an exploration of the social and collaborative possibilites in digital media. Through an online, collaborative photobook I wanted to explore themes like recontextualization and ownership through user-contributed content.

### Themes:

- o User contributed content
- o Co-creation
- o Visual culture

### Result:

- o A collaborative online photo book
- o A printed photo book with contributions by users

# Visit:

https://groupshow.backendbooks.no/vol2

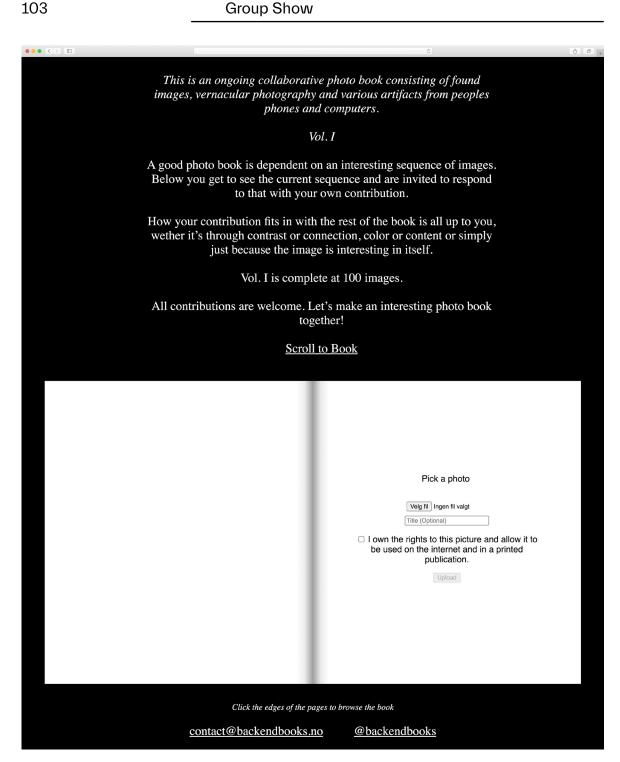


### Introduction

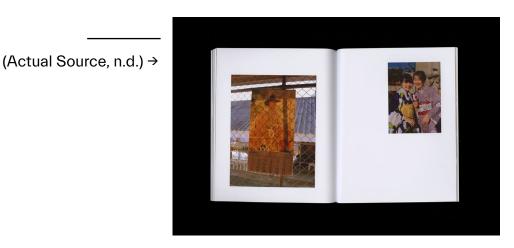
An aspect of digital media that truly separates it from traditional, printed matter is its possibility for connectivity. This was something I wanted to explore, and with the knowledge from the previous modules I now had the tools available to build a fully collaborative digital publication. I wanted to create a low threshold experience. allowing anyone to contribute. This is why I chose to work with images as material. It's not uncommon to carry around a collection of hundreds, if not up to thousands, of images on our various devices. Asking for one of these images as a contribution felt like a reasonable request. I wanted to see what happens when we take these mundane images from various sources, and place them next to eachother in a photobook.

# Summary

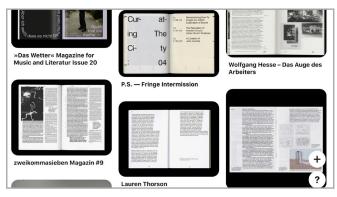
The result was a digital, and later printed, photobook where anyone could contribute with the images they already had on their devices. There was an open brief, inviting the participants to contribute in any way they saw fit, and a simple HTML form to upload an image, which was instantly added to the virtual book.



↑ The website in its entirety without any contributions. The visitors could upload an image through the interface on the right "page".



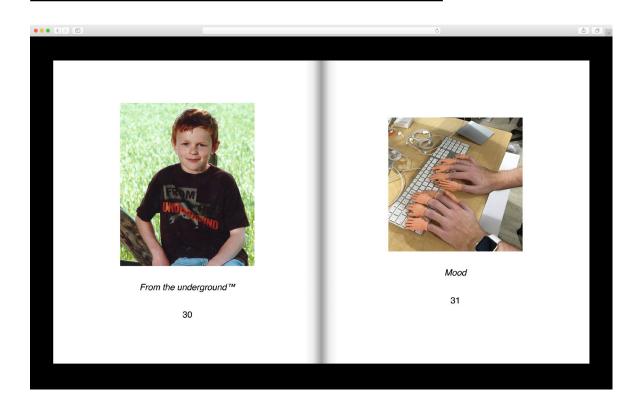
Screenshot from Pinterest →



### **Aesthetics**

For this project I was inspired by the look and feel of "traditional" photo books. The form of the photo book is quite culturally fixed; it's usually composed with an abundance of white space, one or a few photos per page, and set to a strict grid. I wanted to use elements from this form to make it recognizable, but toning it down and make it more mundane. This was a way to match the mundane content, and to hopefully make it more approachable - I didn't want anyone to feel like they were underqualified to contribute.

I was also inspired by the technique of scanning a book with the scanner lid open. This is a method that's utilized a lot by contemporary designers when presenting their work, so I think this aesthetic is familiar for many who has a slight interest in art and design. It's also a way of highlighting and framing the content. The website is based around the skeuomorphic "book" that sits in this black scanner-void; two white pages with a gradient in the center. The brief is set in Times - the most mundane typeface of them all(?), floating above the book.



### Recontextualization

The project is an attempt to visualize what kind of imagery people keep stored on their computers and mobile devices and to highlight what they find interesting, funny, weird or in general worth keeping/saving.

The images are taken out of their natural habitat (some form of personal hard drive) and into a physical and digital photo book. The intent is to recontextualize the submissions and open up for reflections around their origin and existence. It gives a glimpse into the mundane, revealing both intimate moments and seemingly random artifacts and screenshots.

A part of this project was also centered around how the users would respond to the contributions that had been made before them. Would the previous contributions inform the next ones, creating trends in content and style? A good photo book is dependent on an interesting sequence of images, and there will often be some sort of narrative arc. What would the narrative look like when opening up for contributions like this, without any editorial measures?



Eurasian Nuthatch



Life is blurry sometimes

93



Surry Hills

16



Two girls talking, and a car

17



Pesta 2020

70



5-0

71



Untitled

86



Perspektiv

My experience with Firebase and databases from the previous modules made this project possible. But in this project I had to utilize the storage service as well the database service that Firebase provides, in order to host the images that the users contribute. When a user uploads an image the file itself is hosted on the separate storage, but the URL for the image, along with the title the user provides, is stored in the database as text.

When displaying the images in the photo book, the website fetches the URL from the database, and inserts it in an IMG tag on the website.

The immediate effect of contributing an image and seeing it in the photo book at once was an important part of the project. This involves that the website is constantly listening for changes in the database, and will update the website instantly if a new image is added.

# Printing

I wanted this project to exist as a printed publication, both as a documentation of the project and also as a final recontextualization of the content. I had initially set a cap at 100 images. So when the 100th contribution came, I could simply download all the images from the database storage and insert them into an InDesign file. I wanted to intervene as little as possible with the content, so I set up a grid and did nothing else but scale and position the images accordingly.

Since the digital version of the photo book didn't have a cover, I wanted to use this as an opportunity for further visual exploration. I wrote a short script that takes all the images from the database and generates a composite image by transforming, scaling and overlaying the images. This created a rich texture I could use as a foundation for the cover.



### Reflections

This project was valuable for me in many ways. As for technical tools and skills I got experience with handling files, storing them and retrieving them.

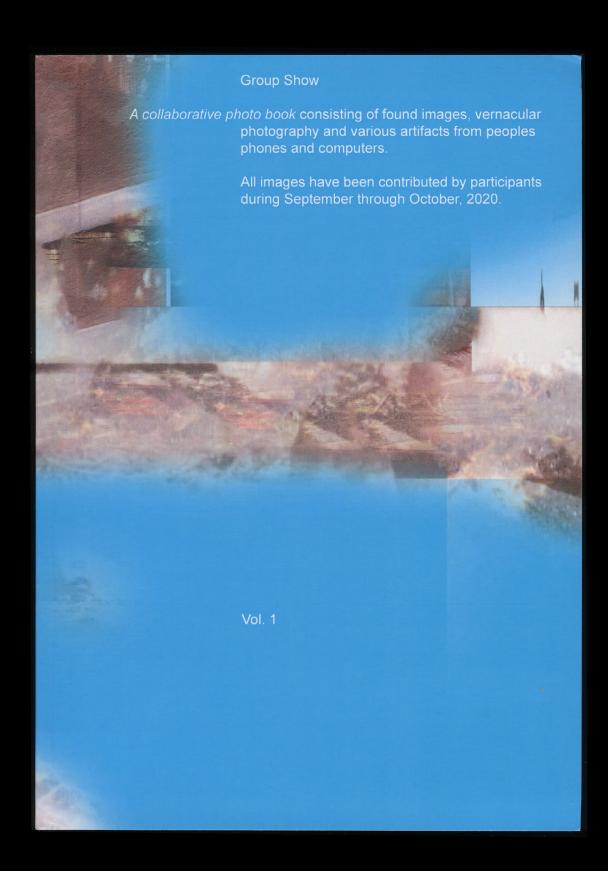
It was very interesting to see how the users engaged with this project. I spread it out initially through social media, and directly to friends. After this it mostly lived on its own, with the engagement coming and going in waves. I was very happy to see that it reached its goal of 100 images in quite a short period of time – without having to push too much to make it happen. This tells me that the experience must have been interesting or engaging to some degree for the participators.

Seing the wide spectre of contributions, from a weide spectre of contributors was both rewarding and interesting.

This is also a project I want to keep doing as a personal venture. It's very simple to maintain, and with the experience from this diploma I can easily set up a framework

to automate everything.

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# **Concrete Poetry Drawing Tool**

This project was an exploration of user-contribution and text as interactive material. It was an investigation of providing a material and letting the users give shape to it through an interactive tool.

### Themes:

- o User-shaped content
- o Custom design tool
- o Typography as visual content

### Result:

- o An online tool for creating concrete poetry
- o A gallery of user submissions

# Visit:

https://concretepoetry.backendbooks.no



Concrete Poetry Drawing Tool

114

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Concrete Poetry Drawing Tool

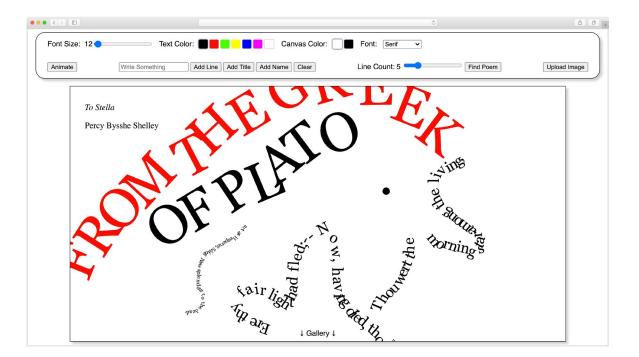
### Introduction

As a designer – with an affinity for typography, I find letters intriguing and beautiful. When working with textual content I'm always considering its formal qualities closely. Using typography as visual content to create compositions is something most designers do regularly, but it's probably a less common activity for non-designers.

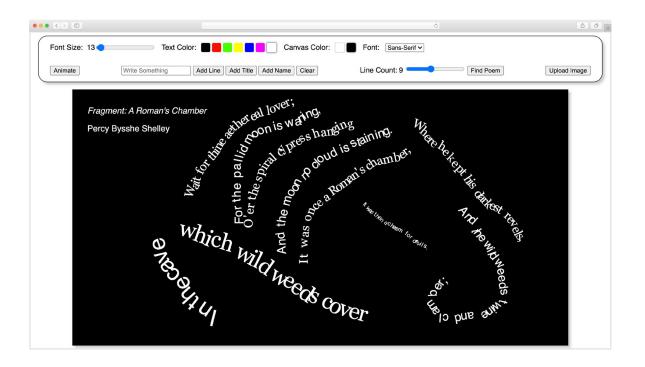
Concrete poetry is a form of poetry where the visual properties of the text is as important as the verbal. Using concrete poetry as a foundation, I wanted to create a tool that would highlight the aesthetic properties of typography, and allow for a playful interaction with the letterforms.

# Summary

The result is an online tool for creating concrete poetry, and a gallery of submitted contributions. The user can find a random poem from a database and use this as the material to draw on a canvas. There are a set of parameters available, like chosing font, font size and colors.



↑ This is the main interface. On top is the toolbar which provides a set of parameters for the drawing tool. Beneath the canvas is a gallery of contributions.



### Interaction

The first thing you have to do when using the Concrete Poetry Drawing Tool is to find a poem to start drawing with. You can chose how many lines you want the poem to be, and then find a random poem with that amount of lines. I included this parameter because then the user can decide how much "material" they have to work with, whether they want a dense drawing with small typography or use large letters and still maintain space around it. Once the poem has loaded you can start drawing on the canvas.

The experience revolves around the main click and drag interaction. This is a simple gesture most are familiar with, and quickly can utilize and control. It's also something that works on both mobile and desktop.

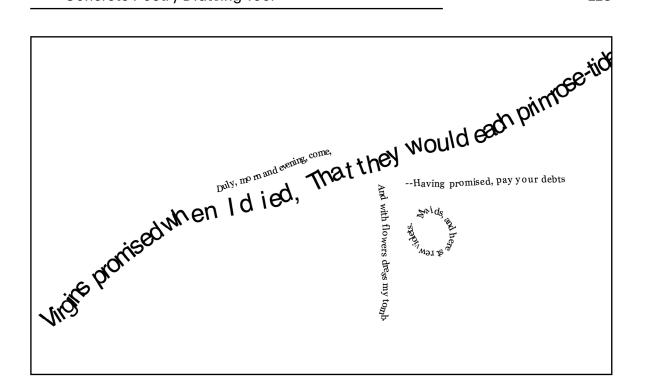
The poem itself is displayed on the left hand side of the screen, and as you draw the letters are moved from this container to the canvas one by one. This is a way of visualizing how much "material" you have left to work with.

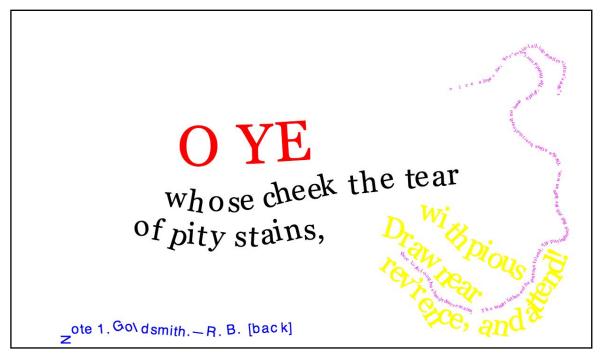


In order to give the users a certain freedom over the expression they wanted, I included a set of custom options. This includes font size, font color, background color and font (Helvetica or Georgia, the native fonts that comes with p5.js). If you change parameters while drawing, it will only affect what you draw after, allowing you to combine sizes, colors and fonts for a varied expression.

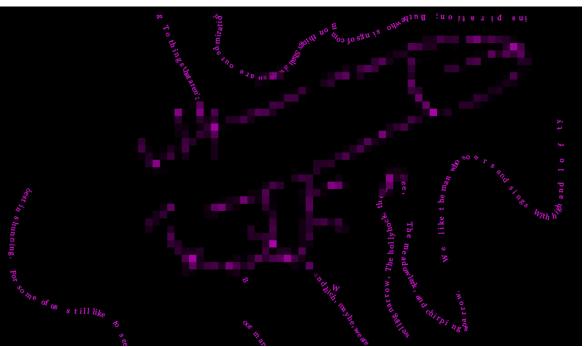
Once you are happy with your contribution you can chose to upload it to the gallery.

I also included an animate button. When clicked it will automatically animate the drawing. This was partly meant as a curiosty, but also a way of permuting the drawing and create variations of it. As a digital tool for concrete poetry it also made sense to utilize this dynamic possibility.









↑ When opening something like this up to the public you have to expect a certain amount of genitalia (censored for your protection).

→ From 62 Mesostics re Merce Cunningham by John Cage (1972).



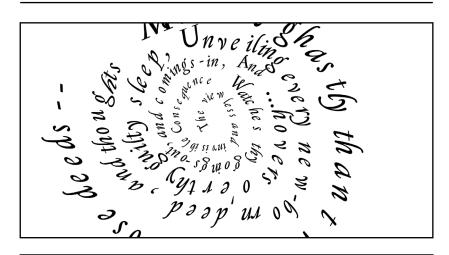
# Aesthetics

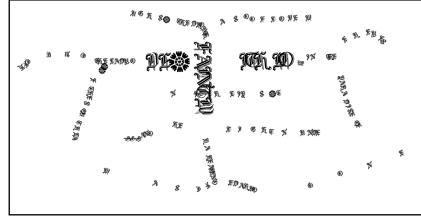
For this project I was naturally inspired by various works of concrete poetry. Early works in genre were usually set with metal type, which came with a set of constraints and limitations. Likewise I wanted the aesthetics of the tool I made to be informed by the technology it was built upon. This involved using bright colors that works well on screen, using the native typefaces of the javascript library I worked with and wrapping everything in a simple website using the innate aesthetics of HTML and CSS.

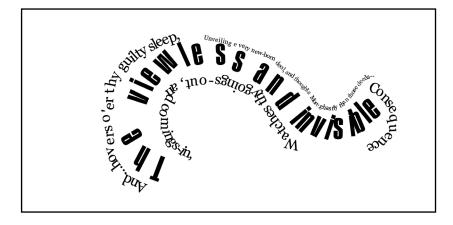
I also wanted all the contributions to have a cohesion to each other. So when providing the options for customizing the aeshetics I had to work with a balance of artistic freedom and constraints to make sure there were some aesthetic similarities.

# Poetry Database

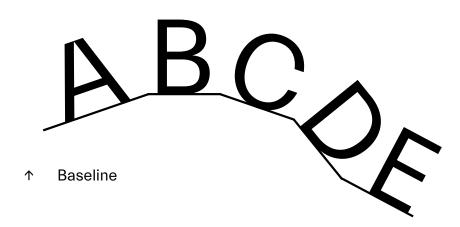
When working with this project I had to provide some content. It wasn't my intention to write a collection of poems for this module, so I looked around for some open API's that provided text content. I came across PoetryDB.org, which was free-to-use, had some neat sorting features, and it had a good documentation on how to use it on GitHub.







↑ Process images. I played around with different font alternatives and range of choices, but decided to keep it "simple".

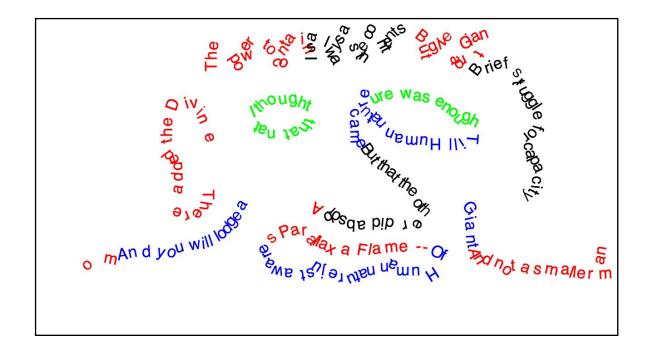


### How it works

The letters of the latin script always sits on a baseline. So when drawing the letters to the canvas, the algorithm needs to know where the baseline is. The baseline is created by recording the first point when the user clicks, and when they have dragged the cursor away from the inital point in a distance equivalent to the length of the current letter in the chosen font size, the baseline is constructed between those two points.

The letter is "moved" from the initial container (which contains the poem as string) to an array of objects (which contains the position, angle, color, size and font of the current letter), and all the letters in the array are drawn on the canvas. I'm using p5.js for all drawing purposes.

When a user clicks the upload button the HTML-canvas is saved as an image to the Firebase storage, reusing elements from the "Group Show" project.



# Reflections

Most of the time in this project was spent on making the mechanics work properly. This resulted in a UI which was pretty crude. Feedback from users revealed that it was not particularly user friendly (and the instructions that appears when first loading the site was often not read at all). If I were to spend more time and iterate further over this project I would focus on making a UI that was easier to understand and more fluid to use.

I, as an expert user of this software, was able to handle it quite well and get the results I wanted quickly. For me this project has a lot of value in building a tool that gives a certain, consistent aesthetic. I see this as very applicable in other contexts, not only as a collaborative project. Building a tool like this can be a very effective way for designers to create e.g. visual identities and publications, especially if a large amount of content with a cohesive visual language is to be produced.

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An exploration of scripting for InDesign, automating parts of the book making process. By transforming a digital content to a physical context, it resulted in an 800 page book which simulates four different cellular automata.

# Themes:

- o Automated book making
- o Digital to physical transformation
- o On-demand printing

# Result:

o An 800 page book that was generated in InDesign

# Visit (visualizer):

https://gameoflife.backendbooks.no



### Introduction

In this project I wanted to apply my programming knowledge in a context of static, printed material. I had no previous experience of working with scripts in InDesign but I knew of the possibility. I saw this as an opportunity to delve into the technique and learn how to use it constructively.

Using scripts to generate books is vastly different from the "traditional" way of making books. I wanted to reflect this in the content as well, and create a book that was as digital as possible – in a physical format.

I also wanted to use this as an excuse to test a print-ondemand service. Print-on-demand is a relatively new concept, where the advantages of digital printing is utilized to deliver a cheap printing service, allowing for small batches and one-off productions.

# Summary

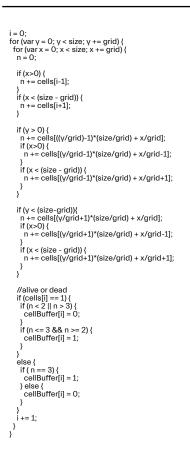
The result is an 800 page book which simulates The Game of Life and three other cellular automata. All the pages have been generated procedurally directly in InDesign except from the four pages containing information.



### Cellular automata

Going into this module I knew I was going to end up with some sort of generative publication, and I needed to find a suitable content for this. I thought it would be interesting to use a material that is normally manifested digitally, and see how the book as a medium could suit this content. A cellular automaton is, simply put, a simulation which runs on a grid of cells. Each cell has a finite number of states, in this case it can either be dead or alive. The simulation starts with an initial state. and then there is a ruleset which defines how the cells will behave. The cells react to the states of its neighboring cells, and this decides wether a cell will change or remain its own current state. John Conway's Game of Life is a cellular automaton with a certain set of rules for behavior, and it is quite well known among computer and technology enthusiasts.

Implementing these kinds of cellular automata is in itself not very complex, but they can still create very complex behaviours and patterns.



← The algorithim revolves around a bunch of if-statements and for-loops

# Creating the algorithm

With my existing knowledge I could easily have created the simulations and imagery using other tools like Processing or in-browser with JavaScript. One of the reasons for doing this module was to learn scripting in InDesign, so I wanted to create the book entirely within that application. There are several advantages of scripting in InDesign. Firstly, it can create native InDesign objects, such as shapes and typography that is fully editable afterwords. Secondly, it can create and handle pages in the document, allowing me to generate 800 pages with content, with the click of a button (after writing the script itself, naturally).

The algorithm I created uses a grid relative to the page size. Initially it populates the grid with live cells based on a birthrate constant. I let a circle represent a newly born cell and a square represent a cell that was already alive in the previous generation. Then for each generation it will add a new page, and draw the current content.



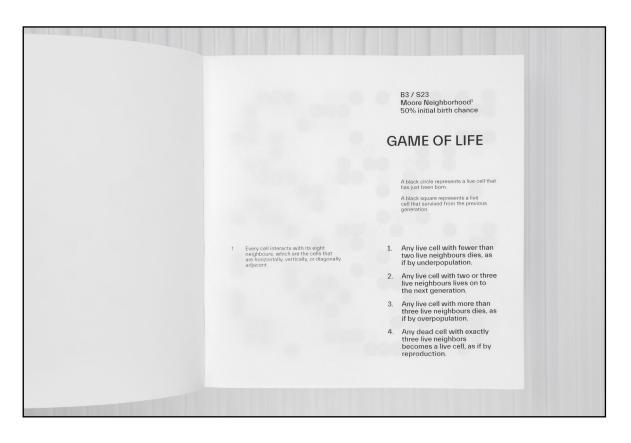
# Designing for print

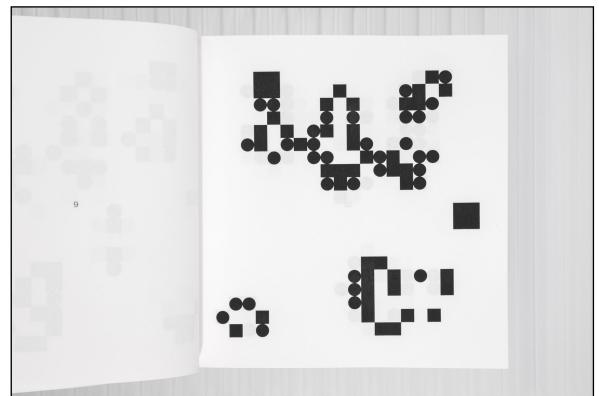
I was going to use a print-on-demand service for this project, and decided on using Lulu – one of the most well known providers. This meant that I had to use one of their pre-existing formats for the publication. I wanted to be considerate of how I designed the publication to get a result that was as good as possible – but still cheap.

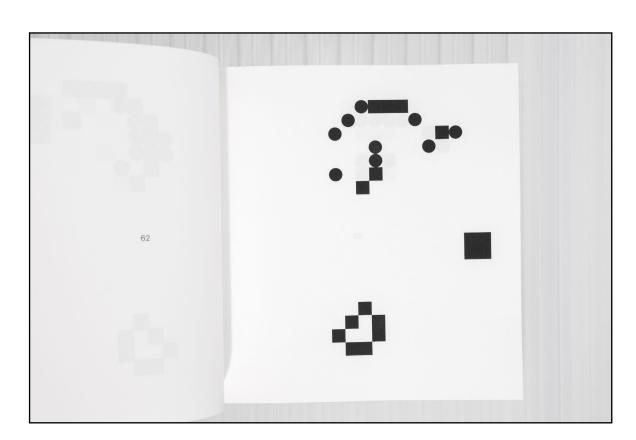
The whole book only consists of black typography, black squares and black circles. This is something even low quality digital print should handle well. I used a decent amount of space around all the margins in case the page trim would be unprecise.

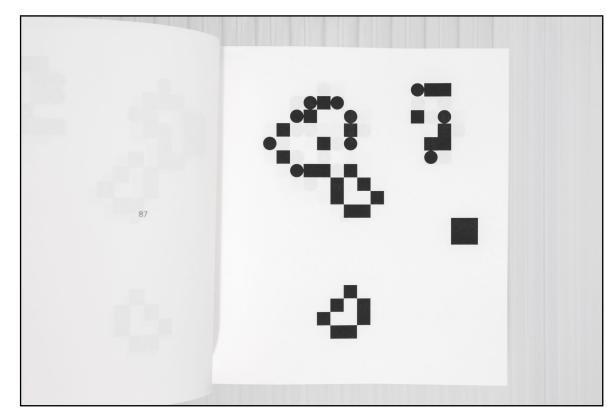
I wanted the physical manifestation of the generated content to be assertive in its attitude, by creating a thick and heavy object. I chose the "large square format" they offer, and filled the whole 800 page limit.

With a book of 800 pages, the spine has to be notably thick. This provides an area that can be used for content which I utilized by placing all text I wanted on the cover directly on the spine.

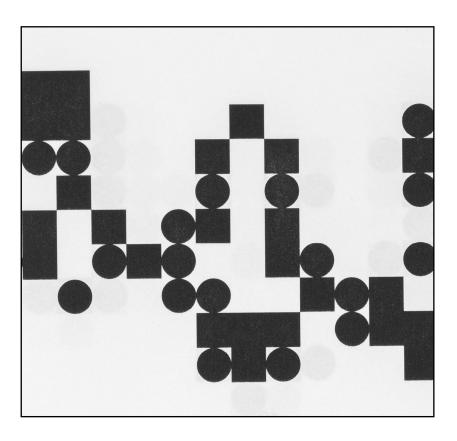








Game of Life 132



### On the book as medium

There are some material qualities of the book that I found to suit the content very well. Representing the simulation sequentially in a book, rather then in e.g. an animation allow the reader to investigate each generation closely, as well as going forward and backward in time. This opens up for a close inspection of the patterns that appear, and how or why they appear. The slight translucency of the pages, allowing you to faintly see the next generation is a great visualizer of the ruleset.

The book as a medium also naturally acts as a visualizer of data in its size and shape. This ability to judge the size of the content before opening the book is a quality you wont find the same way in most digital media.

Game of Life

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### Reflections

The experience of using scripting in InDesign is something I'll definitely use more in the future, and continue to develop as a part of my practice. In this project I used it to generate content in an abstract manner, but using scripting as a tool for working with, modifying and inserting content can be very useful in many other contexts – and it has already been useful for me in other parts of the diploma.

Testing the capabilities of Lulu was also very interesting. I was pleased with the quality of production, and I think this was largely because the design was very production friendly.

# Digital Risograph (in lack of a better name)

This project was a study of designing for a specific printing technique; the Risograph printer. In this project I worked back and forth with digital and physical media, allowing them to influence each other.

### Themes:

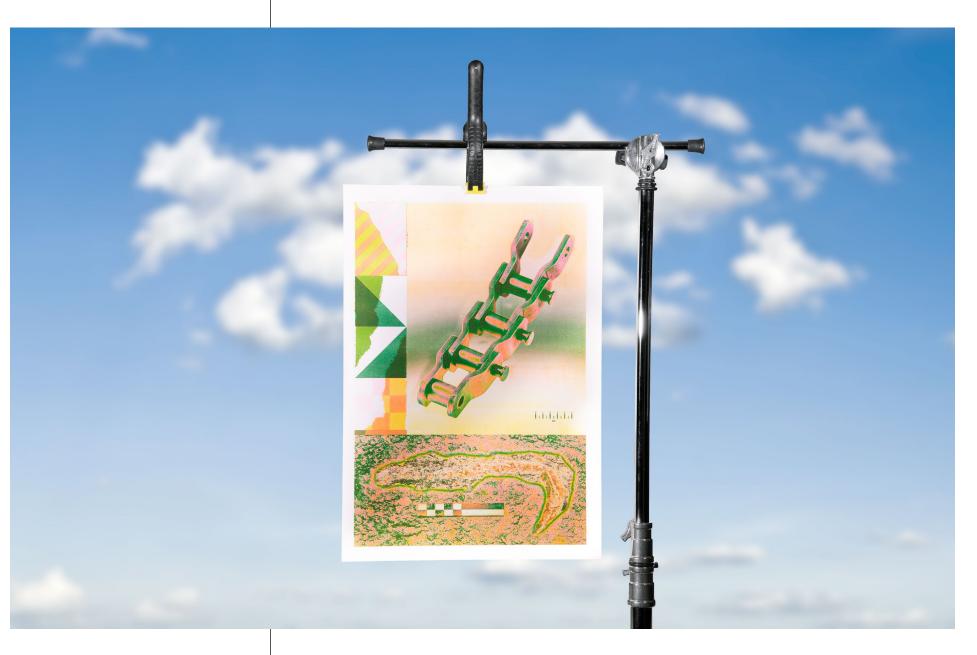
- o Printing technique
- o Digital to physical transformation
- o Physical to digital transformation
- o Custom design tools

### Result:

- o Three multi color Riso prints
- o A website showcasing those prints
- o A color separation tool for Riso printing

# Visit:

https://risoprints.backendbooks.no https://risotool.backendbooks.no



### Designing for print

An idiosyncratic feature of the Riso printer is that each color has to be printed individually, with a separate digital file for each color. This is both a constraint in terms of how to operate the printer, but also a creative opportunity in producing results that are somewhat unique for the printing technique. This is something I was eager to explore.

Digital images consits of RGB-channels which can be split into separate, monochromatic image files. Rather than attempting an accurate, more traditional 4-color CMYK separation I wanted to use this 3-color RGB channel splitting as the foundation for a creative process.

I created a foundation for three posters in Photoshop, collaging found images, patterns and various textures. I wanted a rich blend of textures and colors, so I could examine how they would translate to print. After the design itself was finished I flattened the file, and then split the RGB channels into separate monochromatic images. Now I could work with each channel individually. I remapped the pixel values (brightness) using a curves adjustment in Photoshop, with quite radical settings – and with different settings for each layer.

The intention was that the layers would blend in unexpected and interested ways when printed on the Risograph.

Settings for the "curves" effect for the individual layers. You can see areas where one layer is reduced and the other is amplified, creating interesting blends of color.

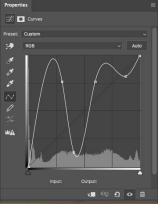
Properties

If Curves

Preset: Custom

Auto

Input: Output:



When it comes to creating printed matter the chosen technique of printing will not only affect the end result, but also the process of creating and preparing the digital print files (to varying degree). Modern digital printers have simplified this process a lot, as they often can print RGB files directly.

The Risograph on the other hand, requires more consideration when preparing the print files – especially for multicolor printing.

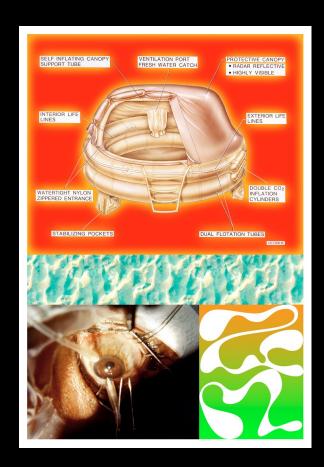
The digital duplicator, also called risograph, from the japanese company RISO, is a unique "copy machine". It combines the high speed of a copier with a silk screen like result. Printing one by one layer of color, with a color library ranging from flourescent to metallics. (Pamflett, n.d.)

I had some previous experience with riso printing, but wanted to explore this technique further. My aim in this project was to create a creative process specifically suited for the production method, and use that as a foundation to create a digital product that was influenced by the printed materials.

# Summary

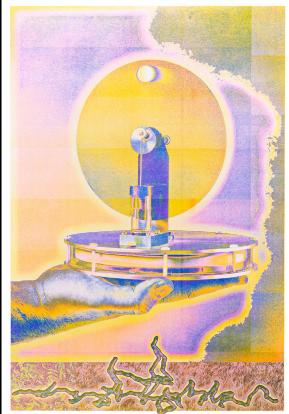
Introduction

The project resulted in three different parts; a set of three prints printed with and designed for the riso printer, an interactive website which showcases these prints and an online tool which replicates and automates the process I used to create the initial print files.













Digital Risograph 142

## Building the digital product

After printing the posters I also wanted to showcase them digitally, and do this in an unconventional manner that highlighted some of the aspects of the printing technique as well as my process of creating the prints. I chose to work with the layers as a foundation for this, since the print process also revolved around this. Layers can mean very different things whether its in a digital or a print context.

Printed matter has a material quality where paper type, ink type, halftone patterns and imperfections in the printing contribute greatly to the perception of the product.

Mannerisms like these don't appear the same way digitally, so I wanted to do something to enhance the experience of viewing the prints digitally.

I took the individual layers I had used for printing, and placed them on top of eachother with a "multiply" blending mode. This simulates the result of ink blending, rendering an image which is very similar to the actual prints. When hovering over the prints with the cursor, these layers are translated outward along the z-axis using a 3d-perspective. When moving the cursor above the print, the 3d-perspective is rotated, letting the users examine the prints closer. This gesture implies how the prints were made, and provides a way of interacting with the static prints.

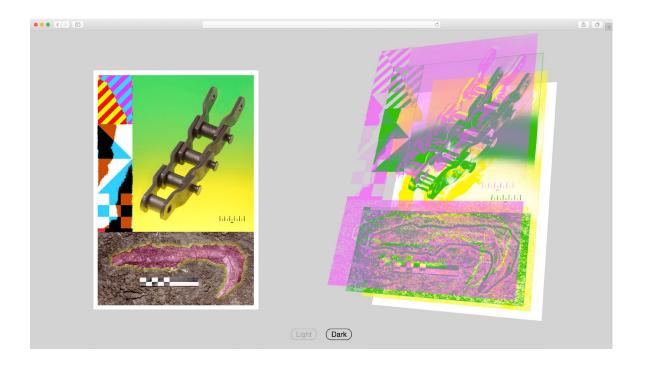
I wanted to showcase the "original" digital posters as well, and through this highlight some differences of digital and printed matter. I exported individual layers from photoshop and placed them on top of eachother in the same manner. When the view is "exploded" on the digital posters, the different visual elements are separated, and gives an insight into the creation and composition of the poster.





The website has a "dark mode"  $\lor$  and a "light mode"  $\land$ .







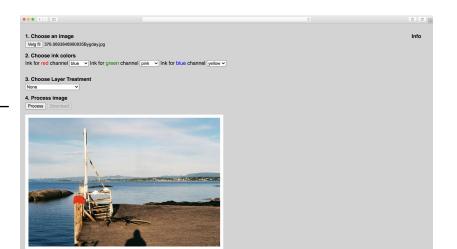




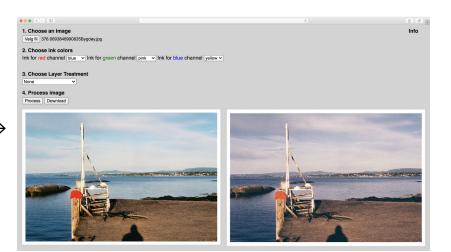
After creating the prints I had learned a lot about color separation for Riso printing, and after creating the website I had a way of showing this work online. I saw a potential in combining my newly found knowledge into a tool. I had developed my own creative process around creating print files for the Riso printer, which resulted in a consistent expression. The process in itself is what I found the most interesting, so I played around with the idea of "publishing" this process in the form of an online tool.

## Result

The result is an RGB separation tool for Riso printing. It's an in-browser application which takes an image, splits the RGB channels, and lets the user assign an ink color for each channel. The special flavour of the tool is the Color Magic™ algorithm, which implements my process of remapping the pixel values of each layer, creating interesting blends of color.



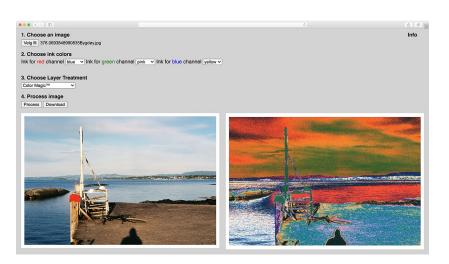
The tool works well for semi-accurate color separation, but its main intention is for more expressive purposes. The initial setting will in most cases match the original colors most accurately. Seen below; original image to the left – Riso preview with blue, yellow and fluorescent pink to the right.

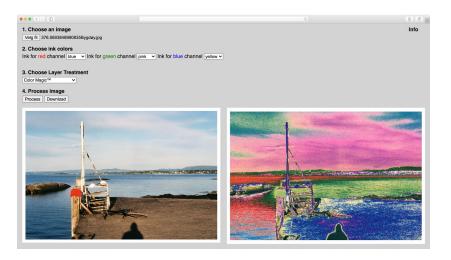


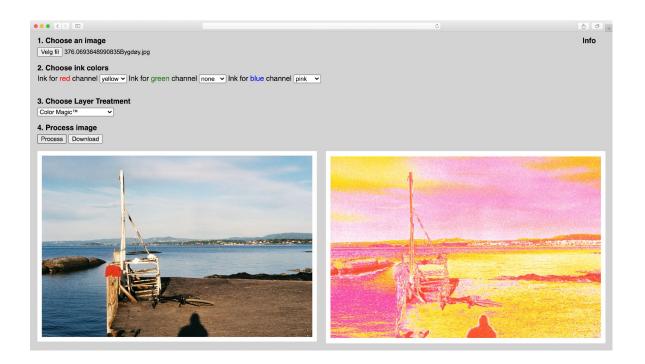


- ↑ I implemented the 3D layer feature from the first website.

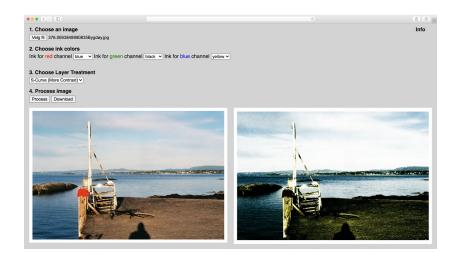
  This way the tool will first preview what the printed multi-color result will look like, and if wanted the user can get a sense of how the different colors are used and layered.
- → To the right are three different results with the Color Magic™ treatment. The ink colors are the same, but the result can still be vastly different.







- ↑ It's not necessary to use all three channels. In the example above only the red and blue channels were used, with pink and yellow inks.
- → Below is another variation with blue, black and yellow ink colors.



When a user uploads an image it is stored in an HTML <img>tag on the website. All the settings - the ink colors and the chosen layer treatment, are stored in variables. When the user clicks "Process", the image is placed on an HTML-canvas which is offscreen, invisible to the user. The algorithm runs through all the pixels in the image, first looking at the red-value, then the green and finally the blue. These values are then remapped to the RGB-values of the selected ink colors - and thus creating the three separate layers. The "layer treatment" function will decide how the colors are mapped, resulting in vastly different expressions. They layers are then placed on top of eachother with a "multiply" blending mode, to simulate the colorblending that will occur when printed.

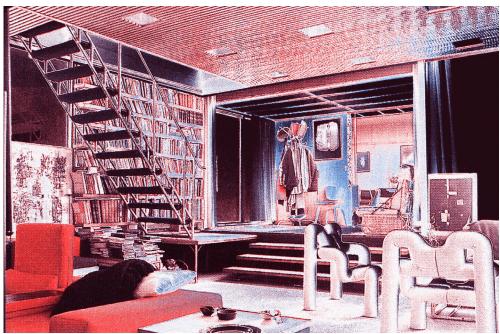
When a user clicks "download" the same thing will happen again, except this time it will remap the original RGB-values to a monochrome, black and white image. This is the format the risoprinter accepts, so they files are ready to be printed instantly. The layers are named after the original file + the color it is supposed to be printed with, for orders sake - since they have to be printed manually.

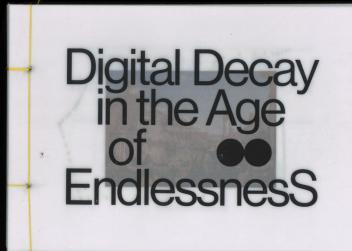
Color experiments with the Color Magic™ treatment, using photos from the Group Show module (simulating the results of 3 color riso printing).

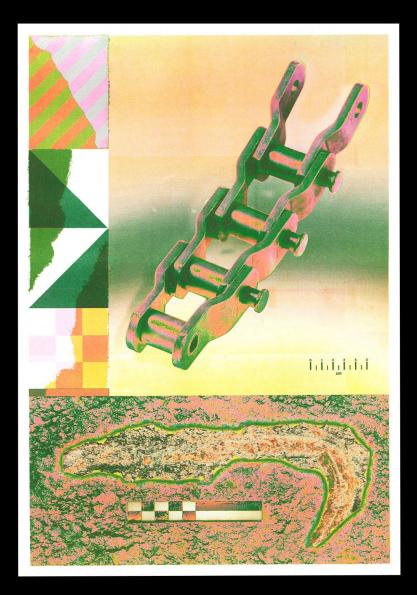


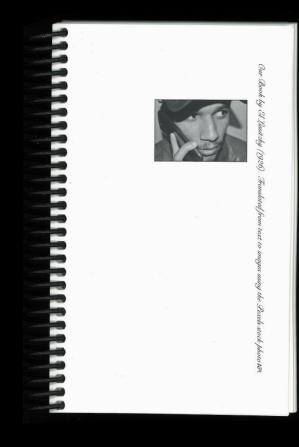














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## Scenarios

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Collective Memories	p.	176

In order to extrapolate the knowledge and experiences I gained through the modules, I've created and visualized two scenarios. These scenarios illustrate how the tools and processes I've created throughout the project can be utilized in other contexts. By using scenarios, I can go further with the concepts, and focus on visualizing them rather than implementing them.

The first scenario envisions an interactive publication, which utilizes digital and social media in combination with print to create an engaging experience. The scenario questions the traditional, linear process of publishing, and aims to extend the life of a publication.

The second scenario envisions a service and an app for sharing photos with a small group of people. It aims to show how my knowledge also might be used in a context not related to the traditional notion of "publishing".

## ↓ Envisioning new horizons



## HJÆRTET MITT I OSLO

### Introduction

gian artist, actor and poet Kristine Utne Stiberg. It's a personal and intimate reflection about being a young adult in contemporary Oslo. Stiberg is a "90's kid"; part of the generation that grew up together with the early internet using MySpace and Piczo to express their identity and thoughts – which in turn has influenced her practice and aesthetics. In order to create an engaging experience, and reflect the aesthetical and connected nature of early 2000's social media, the collection of poems were made as an interactive website where the users could customize the appearance of the poems.

After a period of time where the poems only exist online, it's eventually manifested through a printed publication as well. The users can purchase a printed variation of the customized poems for a more traditional reading experience and as a souvenir of the experience.

The concept is inspired by the Concrete Poetry Drawing Tool, and the ability to let readers interact with the text visually by giving form to the individual poems.

The focus of this scenario is to extend the life of a publication and increase the potential for engagement with it. It's a different publishing process for the people involved with making the publication, and it's a different experience for the consumers of the content.



Her kan du bidra med å designe denne diktsamlingen.

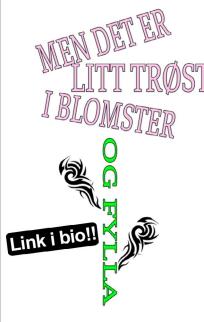
13/52 ———

LAG



Her kan du bla igjer innsendte bidrag.





#### Social media

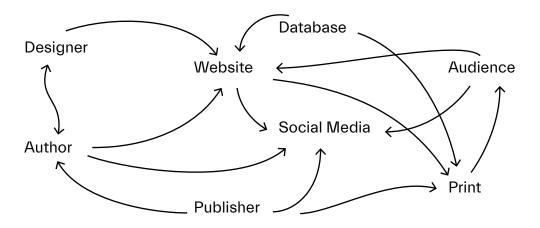
The use of social media is essential to this project, since it relies on user contribution. The publisher and the writer would mainly be responsible for the promotion, but by allowing users to contribute to the project, the aim is to give them a sense of ownership and an incentive to also share material from the publication on their own social media channels.

#### Website

The main manifestation of the project would be through a website. This is where users can read and interact with the textual material.

#### Print

The publication would eventually also exist in a printed format. This is a way for participators to physically own a publication they might have contributed to, and a way for the publisher to monetize the project.



↑ The process of this project would intertwine the actors behind the publication, and the use of channels and platforms for publishing. 161 HJÆRTET MITT I OSLO

# HJÆRTET MITT I OSLO

Her kan du bidra med å designeHer kandenne diktsamlingen.innsend

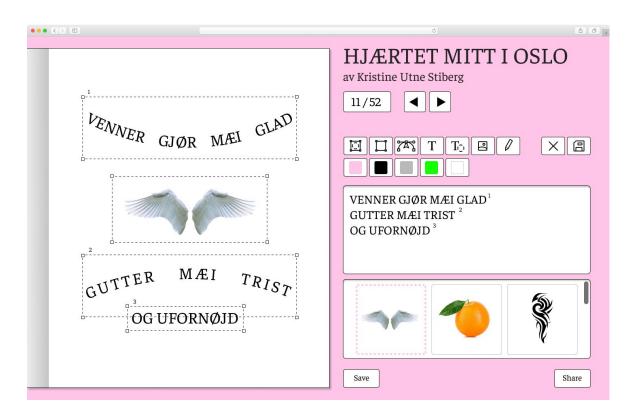
# LAG

# KRISTINE UTNE STIBERG

Her kan du bla igjennom innsendte bidrag.

**LES** 

↑ The project revolves around the website, which has two primary functions: "create" and "read".



## Creating

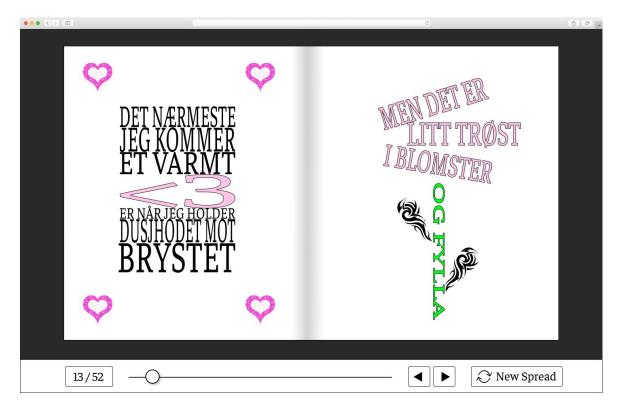
When "creating", the users are presented with the text as raw material, and the page as a canvas for playing with that material. The poems are set in a predefined order, so the user can choose which page/poem to work with. There is a set of tools the users can utilize to customize the text – such as scale and transform, type on a shape, insert clipart, choose color etc. Balancing the amount of freedom the tools provide with how simple they are to use would be important – the experience must be enjoyable for non-tech-savvy people as well. When happy with their contribution, the user can save it, which will add it into a database of contributed pages. They also have the opportunity of sharing it on their social media channels.

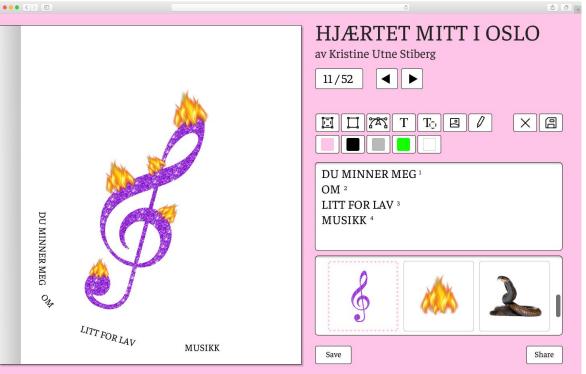


## Reading

In the "read" section, the visitors can browse the already contributed designs of the poems. The order is set by the author, but there can be many different contributions for each poem/page. This will be dynamic, and updated everytime there is a new contribution to the collection.

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## Phase 1: Pre-production

### Parts involved:

- o Publisher
- o Designer
- o Author

## Goal:

o Create a conceptual framework for the publication.

This is the part where the writer, designer, and publisher would come together to develop the concept for the publication. In this case its important that the designer is involved at the beginning of the process, which is unusual in a traditional publishing process.

The goal of this phase is to create a concept and a framework for the publication. All the parts involved must come to a mutual understanding of what this publication is, so they can work toward the same end result. 167 HJÆRTET MITT I OSLO

#### Phase 2: Content creation

#### Parts involved:

- o Author
- o Designer
- Developer (Developer and designer might be the same person / studio)

#### Goal:

- o Write / prepare the textual content
- o Create a visual identity / framework
- o Create a digital product / framework

The second phase is content creation. There would most likely already exist a foundation for the textual content, but it would need to be finalized and prepared.

The designer(s) would develop a visual framework for the publication as well as design the digital product. The developer(s) builds the framework for the website, and the website itself.

The visual identity would be manifested through the website and its UI elements, but also through the contributions from the audience. Creating a set of tools that mantain a similarity across all contributions is therefore an important part of the designers responsibility.

The range of choices the users have, and the outer boundaries of possible actions will shape the experience as well as the outcome, so this must be carefully considered by the designer. **Timeline** 

## Phase 3: Digital Launch

Parts involved:

o Publisher

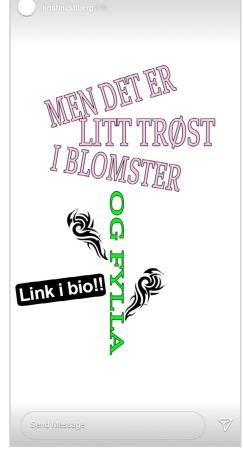
- o Writer
- o Audience

#### Goal:

- o Launch the website
- Promote the website

Phase 3 is the launch of the digital platform. Social media would play an important part in the promotion of the concept, and the digital tool could also be utilized for promo content. Both the writer and the publisher could use social media to reach out to a wide audience.





## Phase 4: Digital Campaign

#### Parts involved:

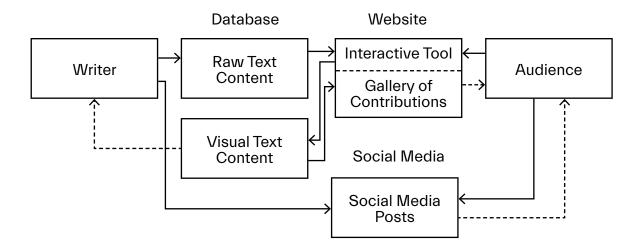
- o Publisher
- o Writer
- Audience

#### Goal:

- o Launch the website
- o Promote the website

Once the platform is launched, it would work as a publication – a way for the audience to read and interact with the content. It would work as a promotional campaign. And it would also work as a collaborative design tool, where the audience give form to the content.

This framework can be quite dynamic as the writer can upload more content along the way, and respond to the user contributed content.



By using the user shaped content as social media promo, there is an opportunity to keep the engagement up for a longer period of time.

## Phase 6: Print manifestation

## Phase 5: Print Preparation

Parts involved:

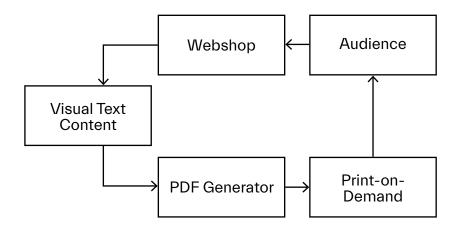
- o Designer
- o Developer

#### Goal:

- o Create a template for print files
- o Create a framework for generating print files

The database would now contain visualized text content, contributed by the users. This content could be used to generate unique permutations of the collection of poems each time someone wanted a printed version. The designer would have to make a layout for the print template, and the developer would have to make a framework for generating the print-ready files.

The "rules" for how the print files are generated could be done in a number of ways – which would effect the experience. It could be generated completely randomly, the users could select their favorites, or it could be a combination of random generation, selecting and editing.

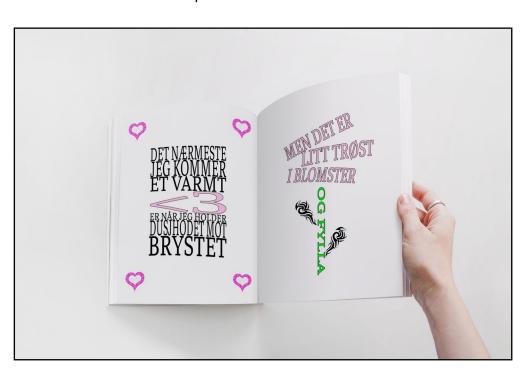


#### Parts involved:

- o Designer
- o Developer

#### Goal:

- o Sell printed permutations of the collection of poems
- After the digital campaign has been online for a while, and hopefully accumulated a decent amount of contributions, the print feature is launched. This would allow the users to purchase a printed version of the collection of poems.
- The printed version is a static and physical manifestation of the experience. It offers a more traditional reading experience and it's a way for the participants to get a "souvenir" after partaking in the project.
- The publisher could also generate a few different variations of the publication, print them in larger print-runs and sell it through the more traditional channels and bookshops.



## Phase 7: Post Release

Parts involved:

- o Audience
- o Publisher

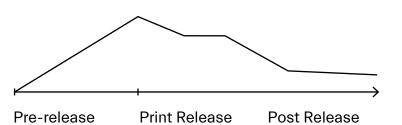
Goal:

o The publications lives on...

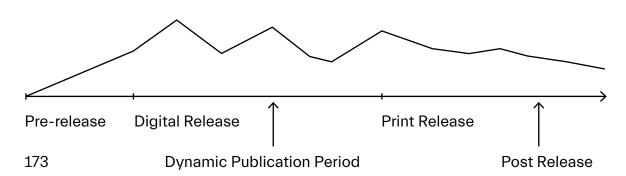
After the release of the print-feature, the digital version can live online for as long as the creators want – still being dynamic and interactive for the audience.

The figures below visualizes two user journeys; a traditional user journey for a publication and the user journey for this scenario (simplified). It demostrates how it is extended, and potentially can maintain engagement for the project much longer than with a traditional publishing process. There are more touchpoints, offering more possibilites for interaction with the content. The fact that the publication is dynamic might give an incentive for revisiting the project multiple times.

## Traditional User Journey



## New User Journey



### Reflection

This scenario presents one way of utilizing digital media to extend the life of a publication. There are an endless amount of ways this could be solved, and a design-tool for the users to interact with the textual content is only one of them.

I'm also aiming to showcase a way of using interaction design for creative purposes, enhancing the aesthetic and experiential aspects of the text rather than creating a utilitarian tool.

Through this scenario I wish to challenge the standard, linear process of making a book, and rather involve the users in the creation of it. The uniqueness of the printed publication is a possible way of increasing the sentimental and souveniral value of the book as an object. And by contributing to the campaign the users might get a sense of ownership to the project as a whole.

I think a project like this is executable on a few different levels, depending on the resources available. If it was backed by a larger publishing house with a decent budget, it could be fully implemented with solid, automated backend solutions. If it was a project by a smaller, independent publisher – with a smaller budget, it might be necessary to compromise on some of the functionality. After having been through the various modules, I feel confident in being able to create a small scale service similar to this, from ideation to implementation.

Excerpt

HJÆRTET MITT I OSLO

VI VÅKNER AV DE SAMME KIRKEKLOKKENE HVER SØNDAG

> MED SAMME STEMPEL PÅ HÅNDLEDDET OG JEG TENKER AT DET VAR DET NÆRMESTE VI KOM ET EKTESKAP

FØR JEG DRAR MÅ DU LOVE MEG EN TING:

IKKE SPYTT SÅNN VANN MED MELLOMMET

MELLOM

TENNA DINE PÅ NOEN ANDRE MENS JEG ER BORTE DA

LOVER DU?

HJÆRTET MITT I OSLO, Kristine Utne Stiberg (unpublished)

# Scenario 2:

## **Collective Memories**

#### Introduction

"Collective Memories" is a service which allows a group of people to create their own private, collaborative photo book over time – inspired by the traditional photo album. The service offers an alternative way of sharing memories from your life with the people who are close to you; wether it's family, friends or colleagues.

The photo book exists as a digital book on the app and online, and can be printed once it is deemed complete. The users can then start a new volume in the series, building up an archive of memories over time.

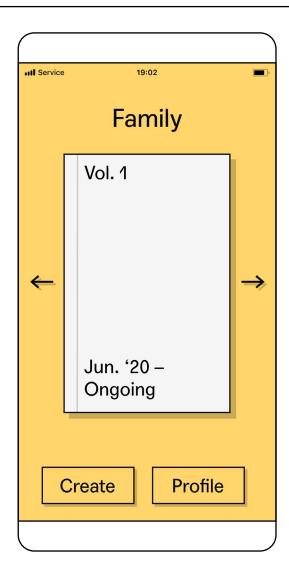
In contrast from existing photo book apps and services, it's supposed to be used as a platform over a longer period of time. It's not just a tool to create a photo book, it's a micro-scale social medium for sharing memories in the form of images.

This scenario is inspired by the Group Show collaborative photo book, but made into a service providing a different, more personal value for the users. It was inspired by feedback and thoughts from users participating in the Group Show experiment, with quotes such as:

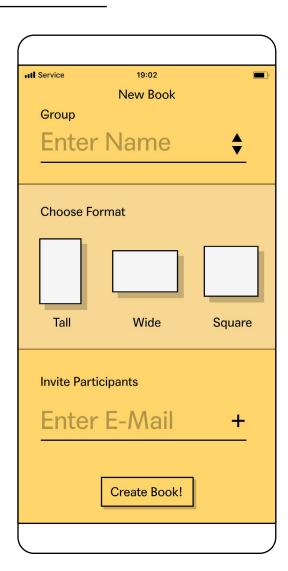
"I like the interface, I want to have this as a tool to make my own photo books!"

and:

"It would be nice to use this as a way of sharing pictures with my family, we try to do it on Facebook but the platform doesn't really suit our needs."



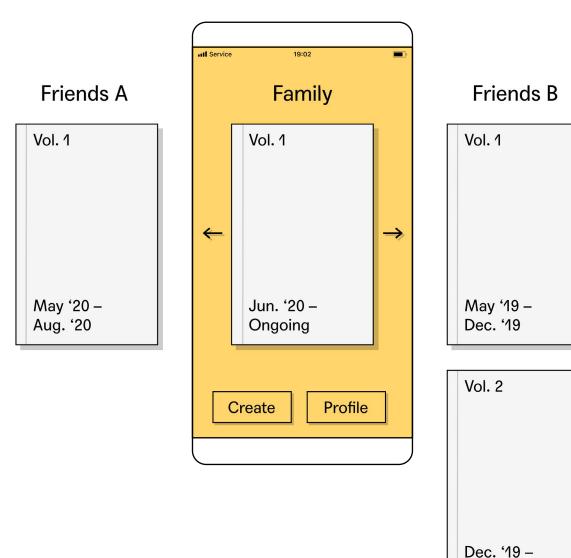




The first step is to create a book. It can either be created for an existing group of people, or by inviting participants to the new book project. The user can then decide between a few pre-defined formats for their book.

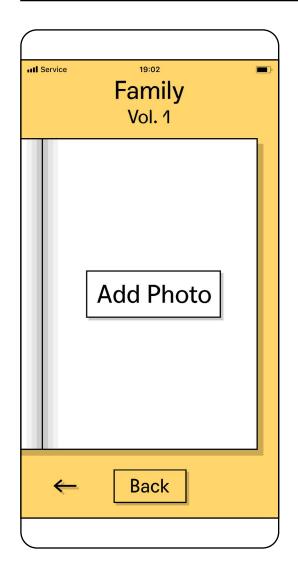
The invited collaborators will get an e-mail with a prompt to sign up for the service and join the photo book. If they're already users of the platform, they'll be added directly to the book.

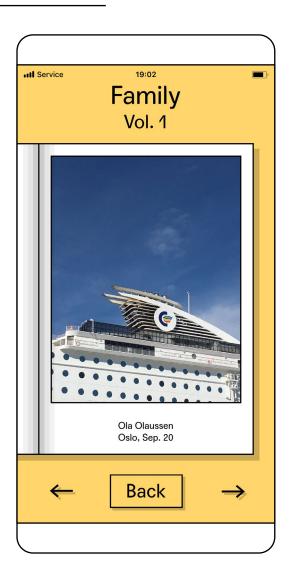
179 Collective Memories



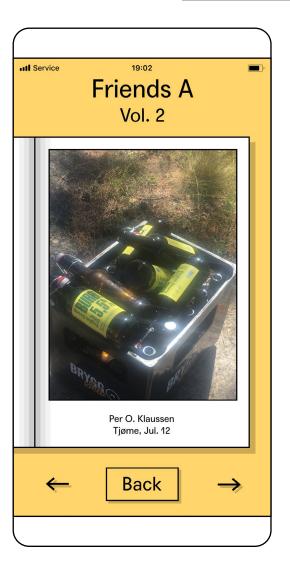
The home screen revolves around the collection of books. Each user can be part of different groups at the same time, and each group can have several books.

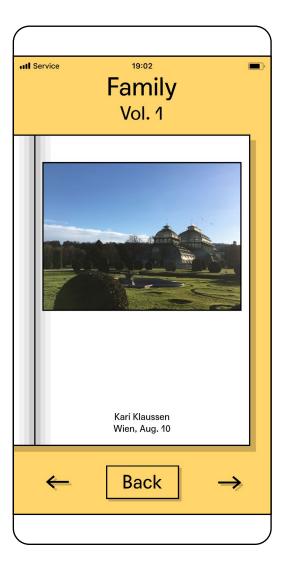
Ongoing



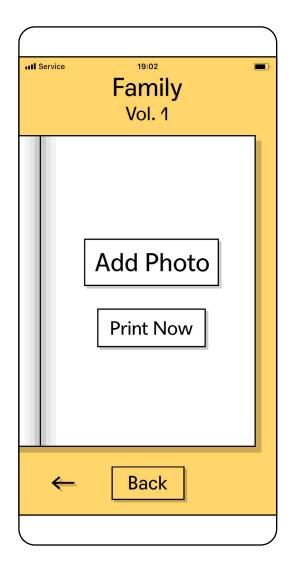


When clicking in to a book, the user can either add a photo or look at the previously contributed photos. The photos are accompanied with some information; the user that uploaded it, the place where it was taken and the date. This information is added automatically from the metadata in the image.



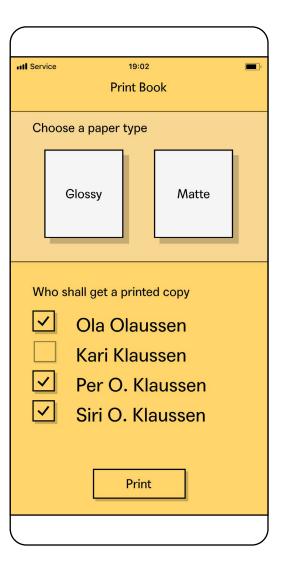


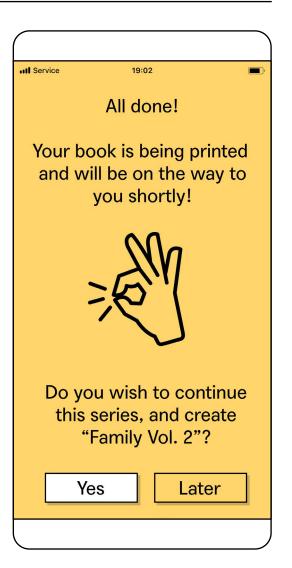
The different groups and different books will have different intentions, content, and span different periods of time. One book might be created with the intention of collecting images from a specific vacation, lasting only for a week, while another might be ongoing for a year, collecting mundane memories from everyday life.





After having filled out at least 20 pages (a minimum for technically printing and binding the book), the user can choose to print the book. This will open a dialogue in which the user can select a cover style from a few pre-defined options, upload an image for the cover and choose a color theme.





They can then select a paper type; either matte or glossy. Finally they can select who shall receive a printed version of the photo book. Some of the participants might live in the same house hold, and some might prefer only to use the digital platform.

The book will then be printed, using a print-on-demand service, shipping the copies directly to the adresses of the users which is registered on the app.

The user will be prompted to create a new photo book with the same participants - with the aim of building a series of books over time.

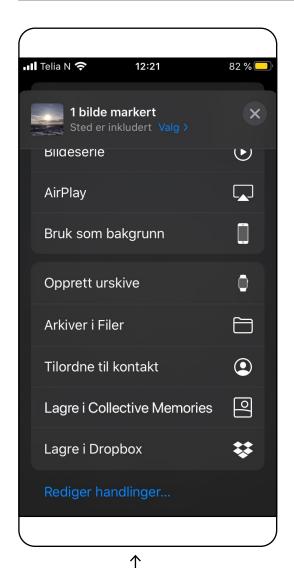
#### Reflection

Rather than operating in a traditional publishing context, this scenario can be seen as a form of "micro-publishing". The goal is to falicitate for and incentivize the sharing of content for a small group of people. It's an alternative to the larger established platforms like Facebook and Instagram where the content is broadcasted publically – and incentivized through "likes" and "comments".

Put up against the large social media channels, the concept can almost be seen as a form of "anti-publishing". It actually aims to reduce the amount of people that will see the content when you "publish" it.

The scenario aims to illustrate how to utilize a content most people already possess (the images) in combination with both digital and physical media, and possibly increase the value of said content.

There already exists a lot of platforms for creating photo books in a simple and effective manner, some of them also includes collaborative functions. What separates this concept is the fact that it's supposed to live over time, existing both digitally and physically. It would work as a way of both sharing and collecting memories and images with your chosen group of people – more than just a service for creating printed photo books.





Using the smart phone's API the functionality could be integrated in the device's OS, allowing for a seamless and effective way of uploading images to the photo book. The app would notify the user when someone else uploads a photo to one of the ongoing books.

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# **v.2**

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After having been through all the modules and produced a large body of work, I was eager to collect all this work in a unifying context and publish it somehow. This resulted in BackendBooks.no: a resource platform for experimental publishing.

It features the work I've done throughout this diploma along with all the references and resources I've used or come across.

Visit:

www.backendbooks.no



## An archive and a resource platform

As mentioned earlier in this report, I created the construct of Backend Books as a framework for this project. When working with the modules I thought of it as an experimental publishing practice, which created some guidelines for how to execute the projects. After having been through those modules, I shifted the perspective of what Backend Books was. Looking at it as an archive and a resource platform was a way to highlight that my project as a whole was more about creating tools and concepts for publishing, than the publications themselves.

The final contribution of this diploma is BackendBooks.no. The website contains:

- o All the products I created in the modules
- o All the code, as open source material
- o All the references that inspired this project
- o All resources, tools, libraries I used in the project

## Open Source as publishing

I wanted to not only publish the results of the modules, but also the tools I created in the process. Throughout the project I've reused parts from the previous modules, and reshaped and built upon them. I've also used snippets of code found different places on the internet such as StackOverflow and GitHub. Sharing code is a vital part of the programming community, and I look at it as a form of publishing.

I've made all the code in my project open source, and uploaded it to GitHub. This means that anyone can use, study, change or distribute the work in any manner.

By making my process available for anyone who is interested I hope to inspire and facilitate for further exploration of the subject. The aim is that if anyone want to do similar projects, they can easily take the parts of code that is relevant to them and reuse it in a new context.

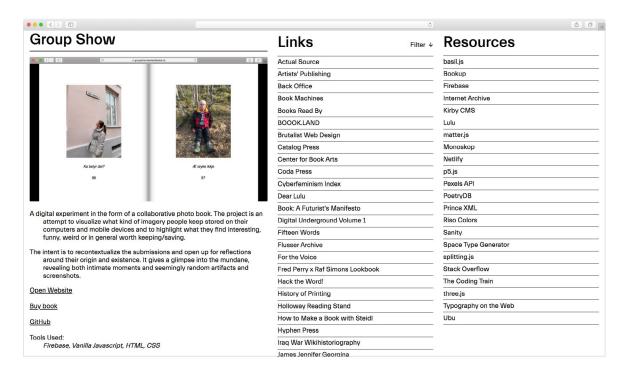
••• (> 🗈	c)	<b>6</b> 6
BACKEND BOOKS	<b>Links</b> Filter ↓	Resources
Riso Separation Tool	Actual Source	basil.js
•	Artists' Publishing	Bookup
Digital Risograph	Back Office	Firebase
Game of Life	Book Machines	Internet Archive
Concrete Poetry	Books Read By	Kirby CMS
•	BOOOK.LAND	Lulu
Group Show	Brutalist Web Design	matter.js
Our Book	Catalog Press	Monoskop
	Center for Book Arts	Netlify
Vellum	Coda Press	p5.js
Digital Decay	Cyberfeminism Index	Pexels API
9 ,	Dear Lulu	PoetryDB
	Book: A Futurist's Manifesto	Prince XML
	Digital Underground Volume 1	Riso Colors
	Fifteen Words	Sanity
	Flusser Archive	Space Type Generator
	For the Voice	splitting.js
	Fred Perry x Raf Simons Lookbook	Stack Overflow
	Hack the Word!	The Coding Train
	History of Printing	three.js
	Holloway Reading Stand	Typography on the Web

## The website

The website consists of three lists in three different columns. The first column consists of the demos I created in the different modules, the second column consists of all the relevant links I've come across or referenced somehow during the project. The third column consists of all the resources I've used or looked into during the project.

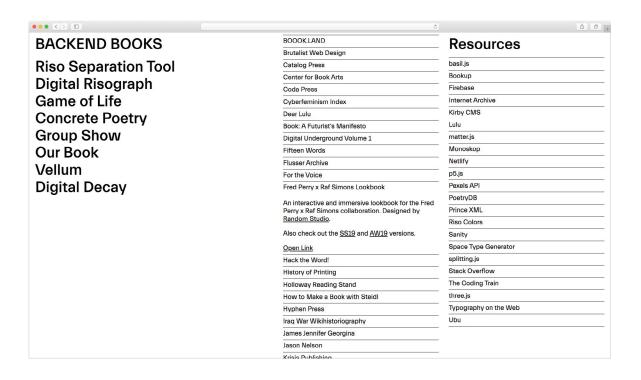
The different entries in the list contain information which is hidden by default, but becomes visible on click. The demos containt more information along with an illstrative image.

The list of relevant links ended up being quite long, so I needed some way of filtering the entries. I created a simple jQuery script that would be compatible with the backend system I made for the content, so the users can filter out links using the provided categories.

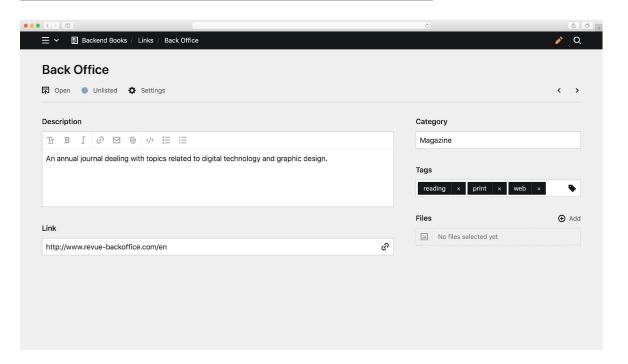


↑ The demos contain a short description, link to the demo website and a link to the GitHub repository. For the modules where I made a printed version with Lulu, there is a link to the Lulu shop where it can be purchased.

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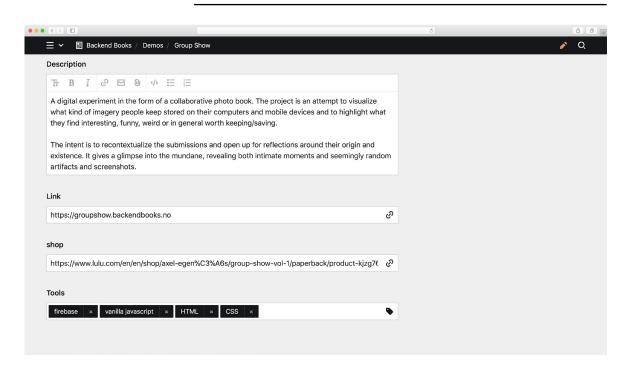
↑ The links and resources contain a short description along with the actual link. Some of them contain relevant secondary links as well.



#### Framework

When creating this platform I wanted to use it as a last exercise in learning a new tool. For the other web-based modules I had simply hard-coded everything in HTML. Since this website would involve a large amount of content I wanted to use the opportunity to learn more about CMS's (Content Managing System). I had experience with platforms such as Wordpress and Cargo Collective, but I wasn't pleased with the amount of flexibility they provided. I landed on using Kirby CMS for this task, as it seemed to be a flexible platform that was still easy to set up and learn the basics of it.

This solution was very fitting for the project as I had full control over the frontend by creating the templates myself, and I could also customize the backend, creating a system which suited the content I would use.



The custom backend UI allows me to only enter the information necessary.

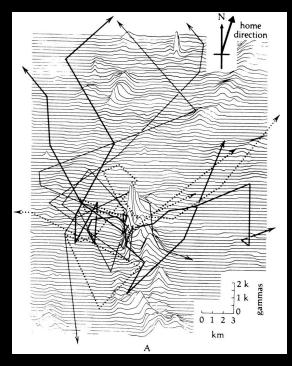
- ↑ The image above shows the template for adding democontent.

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#### Aesthetics

- I see this platform as something like a combination of an archive and a laboratory. It hosts the work I've done, which is of an experimental nature, and it's an archive of all the references and resources I've used to make it.
- I wanted the aesthetics of the platform to express this sentiment. I crafted the identity by drawing inspiration from research papers, test equipment and archive lists.
- The typeface I chose is Everett by Nolan Paparelli. It's a contemporary and versatile grotesque typeface that features an organic drawing and a particular digital flavor (Paparelli, n.d.), which makes it suitable for this application. I'm primarily using the font in two sizes, a small size with the regular weight for bodycopy, subheadings and misc. information, and a larger size (roughly 2–3 times larger than the small size) with a medium weight for the main headings.
- For better readability and clearence, as well as a visual device, headings, subheadings and section deviders can be complimented with a black border.
- The layouts for the identity utilizes a strict grid. In order to subtly subvert this I'm using an outdent instead of an indent for bodycopy as an unexpected visual feature.

Visual inspiration for the identity →



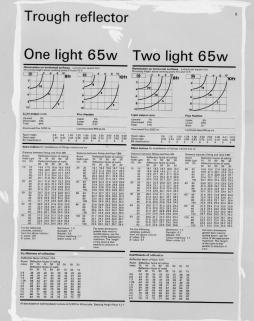
sso.fr	digest			
edu	digest			
hec.ca		relayed (to non-dsn-aware mailer)	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:26 +0100	X
.qc.ca		delivered		X
rbrooke.ca		expanded	tue, 14 dec 2010 09:00:07 -0500 (est)	X
orooke.ca		delivered (to mailbox)	tue, 14 dec 2010 09:00:07 -0500	X
real.ca		relayed (to non-dsn-aware mailer)	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:28 +0100	X
mtl.ca			tue, 14 dec 2010 08:59:38 -0500	X
nber.ca		relayed (to non-dsn-aware mailer)	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:29 +0100	X
os.ca		expanded	tue, 14 dec 2010 08:59:33 -0500 (est)	X
.ac.ma		delivered	tue, 14 dec 2010 13:46:21 +0000 (wet)	X
cc		expanded	tue, 14 dec 2010 16:39:38 +0100 (cet)	X
iniv-nc.nc		relayed (to non-dsn-aware mailer)	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:31 +0100	X
uvain.be		relayed (to non-dsn-aware mailer)	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:31 +0100	X
clouvain.be		relayed (to non-dsn-aware mailer)	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:32 +0100	X
kg-computer.de		expanded	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:33 +0100 (cet)	X
.org				
ie.org		delivered	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:35 +0100 (cet)	X
armerie.org		relayed	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:15 +0100 (cet)	X
c.org		expanded	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:23 +0100 (cet)	X
l.org		relayed (to non-dsn-aware mailer)	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:23 +0100	X
l.org		relayed (to non-dsn-aware mailer)	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:24 +0100	X
.org		relayed (to non-dsn-aware mailer)	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:25 +0100	X
sco.org		relayed (to non-dsn-aware mailer)	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:25 +0100	X
org		relayed	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:26 +0100 (cet)	X
es-po.org		expanded	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:26 +0100 (cet)	X
q.org		expanded	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:27 +0100 (cet)	X
org		expanded	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:27 +0100 (cet)	X
s.org		expanded	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:28 +0100 (cet)	X
alistes.org		delivered (to mailbox)	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:41 +0100	X
dyndns.org		relayed (to non-dsn-aware mailer)	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:29 +0100	X
alou.org		relayed (to non-dsn-aware mailer)	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:29 +0100	X
d.uzh.ch		relayed (to non-dsn-aware mailer)	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:33 +0100	X
maniak.ch		relayed (to non-dsn-aware mailer)	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:30 +0100	X
chuv.ch		relayed (to non-dsn-aware mailer)	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:23 +0100	X
il.ac.uk		relayed (to non-dsn-aware mailer)	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:23 +0100	X
timedia.com		expanded	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:24 +0100 (cet)	X
hania.com		delivered	tue, 14 dec 2010 14:59:53 +0100	X









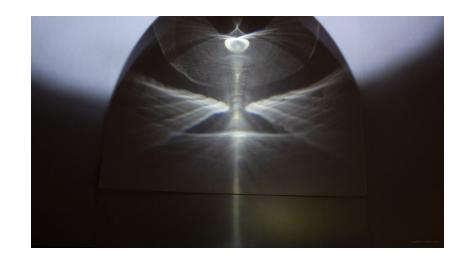


# Reflections

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That concludes all the work I produced during this diploma. In this following section I'm offering some brief final thoughts and reflections around the project.

## ↓ Reflections



#### **General Reflections**

Through this diploma I've had the opportunity to evolve as a designer, and work within a field I find interesting. It's been a project that has had a great value for me as a designer, and I hope that parts of this diploma will hold value for others as well.

I've worked with a hands-on approach, focusing on creating functioning products. This means that after the diploma period, the artifacts I created will continue to live online and exist in the world somehow. This was an important part of the project, since it dealt with the theme of publishing.

Having these products is a way to show some of my capabilites as a designer to potential clients, and its a way to discuss possibilities of a technical and a conceptual nature.



### My skills as a constraint

Letting my design skills be a constraint in this diploma has had a vast effect on the outcomes of the project. It has been very beneficial to me, in order to push myself to learn more and expand my designerly toolkit. But this constraint also narrowed down the possible outcomes of my modules. While others use Figma to visualize concepts and can envision a team of programmers implementing it, thus eliminating the technical limitations to what the concepts can be – I had to constantly consider what I would be able to implement in a short amount of time when ideating and creating concepts. It also involved that I had to spend more time during the initial prototyping and sketching, since I had to sketch the technical solutions in addition to the visual and the concept.

I think that gaining a deeper understanding of programming and technical frameworks is going to help me as a designer even when not programming myself. I have gotten a new perspective on possibilities within the digital realm, and have a much better basis for collaborating with programmers.

#### Modules

A result of working module-based is that I've had the opportunity to have a large output and create many different products and artifacts. Through the different modules I touched upon a wide spectre of themes and tools, which was very valuable for me. However, due to their fast paced nature, each module suffered a bit in terms of depth. Since the process had to be so quick, there was little room for iteration, testing and improving. This is a clear weakness of the module-based approach, but it was still a suitable choice for what I wanted to get out of this diploma.

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#### User contribution

Even though this diploma hasn't been heavily centered around user testing and feedback, my projects have been used and tested by a lot of participants. This is an advantage of making things open to the public. This knowledge and experience is something I will take with me, and it's something I see a vast application for in the more "traditional" interaction design contexts.

The ability to create quick prototypes that are functional, interactive and can handle real data is something I see as an incredibly valuable tool in a general interaction design context, and it's something I look forward to apply in "real" cases in the future.

## Publishing

By working with publishing as a theme, but without being influenced by it in the traditional sense, I've gotten some new and valuable perspectives. I hope to be able to take some of this knowledge with me into the publishing industry. I hope the artifacts I created can be a way to start discussions with relevant actors in the field, and possibly be a way for me to do more similar projects.

I also think this project will influence the way I think about most projects, not just publishing-related. Publishing, as in the act of making something public, is relevant in most contexts today due to the prevalence of internet and social media. The knowledge and practical experience I gained through this diploma is therefore applicable in many other projects – not necessarily related to publishing.

Ok

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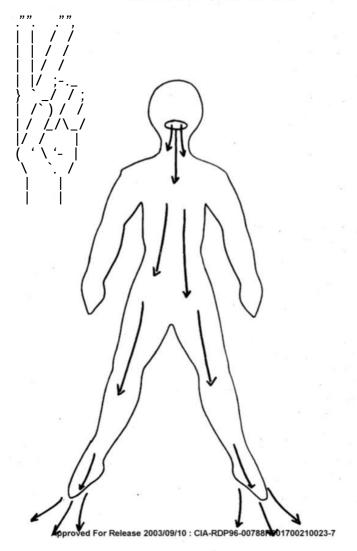
Thank you for reading!

That's all I have to say for now.

Hope you enjoyed it :-)

pproved For Release 2003/09/10: CIA-RDP96-00788R001700210023-7 RBX - 3 RESONANT BREATHING EXERCISE

"EXHALE STALE, USED-UP ENERGY OUT FEET"







## Mosse Sjaastad:

For supervision, support and critical questions throughout the project.

## Anders Hofgaard & Helge Hjorth Bentsen:

For conversations, inspiration and feedback – and for letting me use of your Riso printer.

## Truls Bauer:

For writing the text *Vellum* – and for being generally inspiring.

## Kristine Stiberg:

For letting me use your name and your text *HJÆRTET MITT I OSLO* – and for being generally inspiring.

## William Stormdal:

For insights, inspiration and the fruitful conversation.

## João Doria:

For the insights, references and feedback.

Erlend Grimeland, Elias Olderbakk & Jonas Vetlesen: For support and feedback throughout the project.

Everyone who participated in the experiments: Your contributions were invaluable.

## References

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