Positions through triangulating

Δ 1 STUDIO

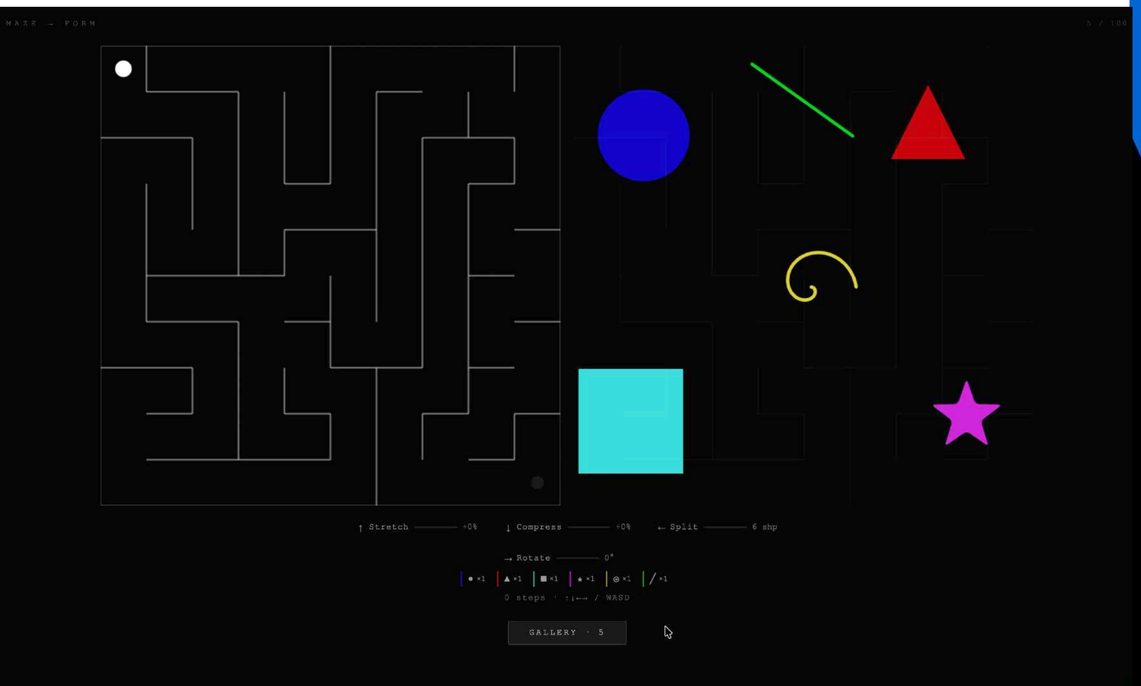
Jiayao Huang (Claire)

Unit 2 Practice Overview

Across Unit 2, I explored how graphic form could emerge through participation rather than direct composition by the designer.

1. Graphic Maze

Audience members generate unpredictable patterns by walking through a maze.





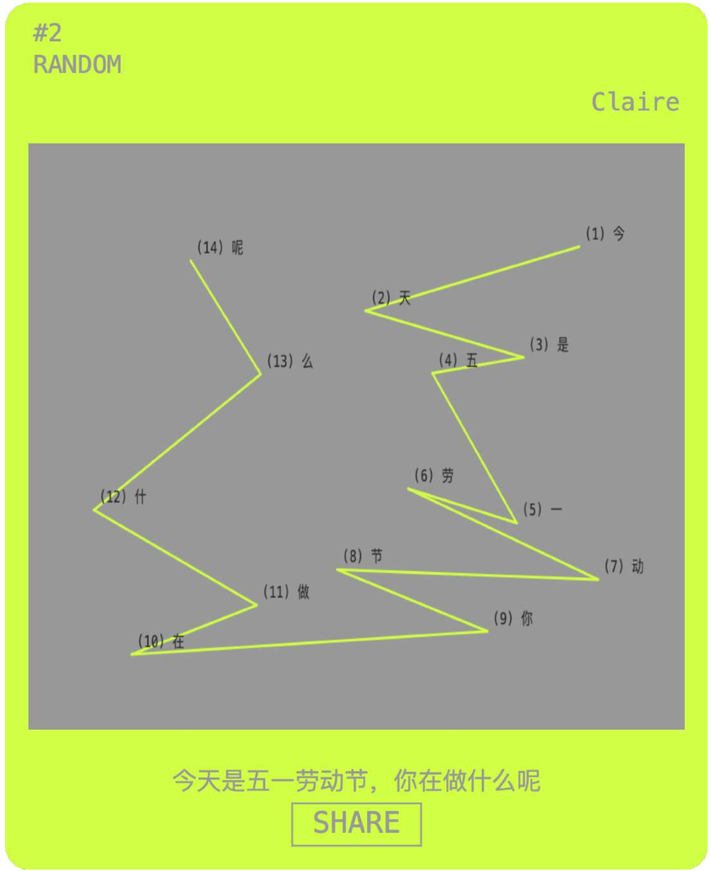
Unit 2 Practice Overview

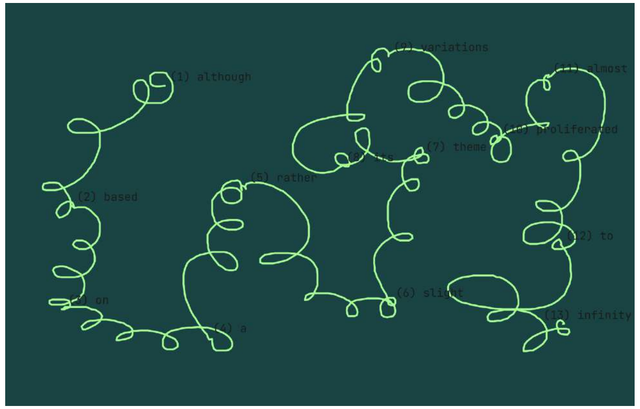
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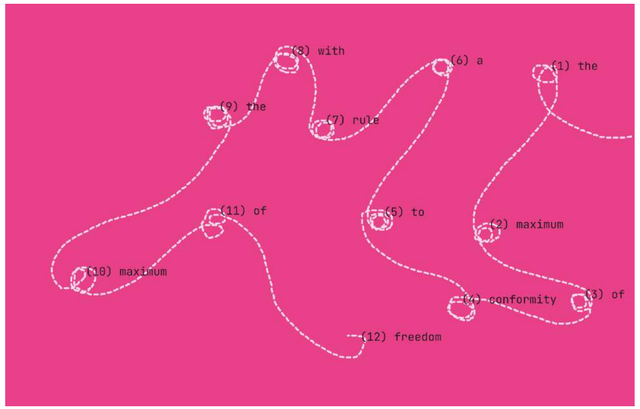
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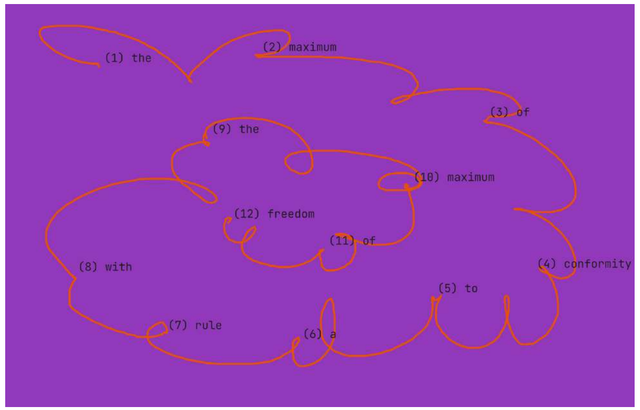
A multi-platform, collaborative online sentence-chain website—where participants are invited to create a new sentence based on the last word written by the previous person—further explores how audiences can create new meaning by contributing their own ideas within the established rules of the webpage.

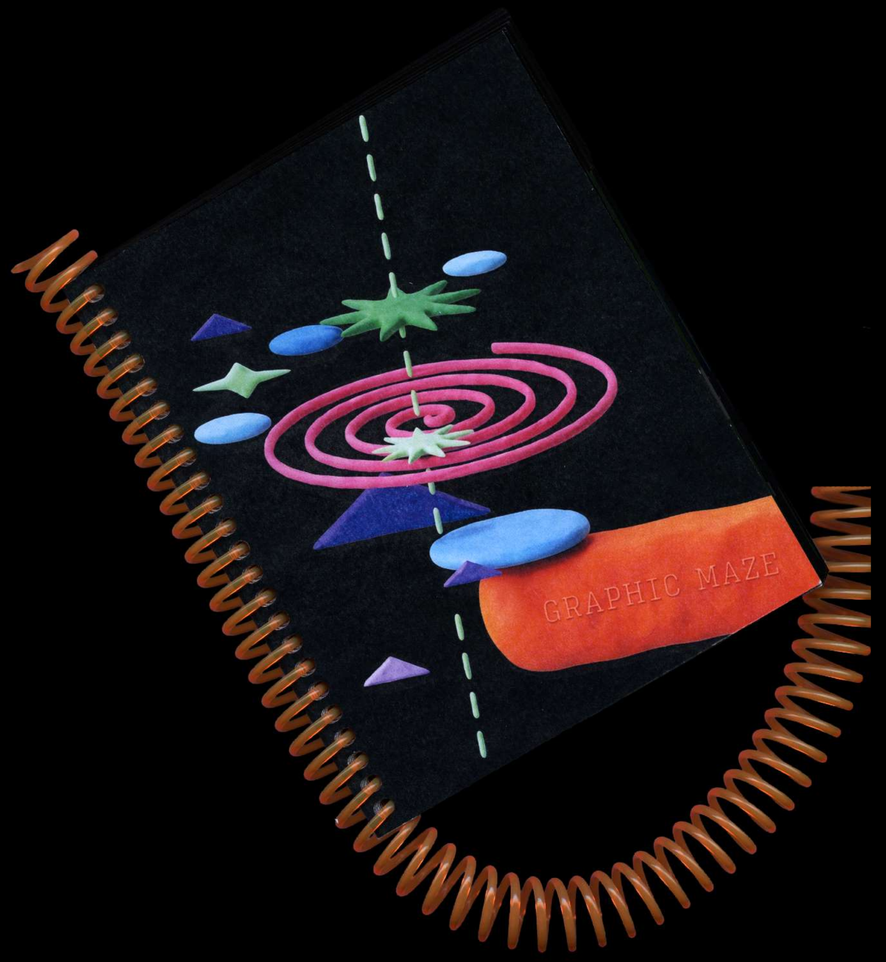


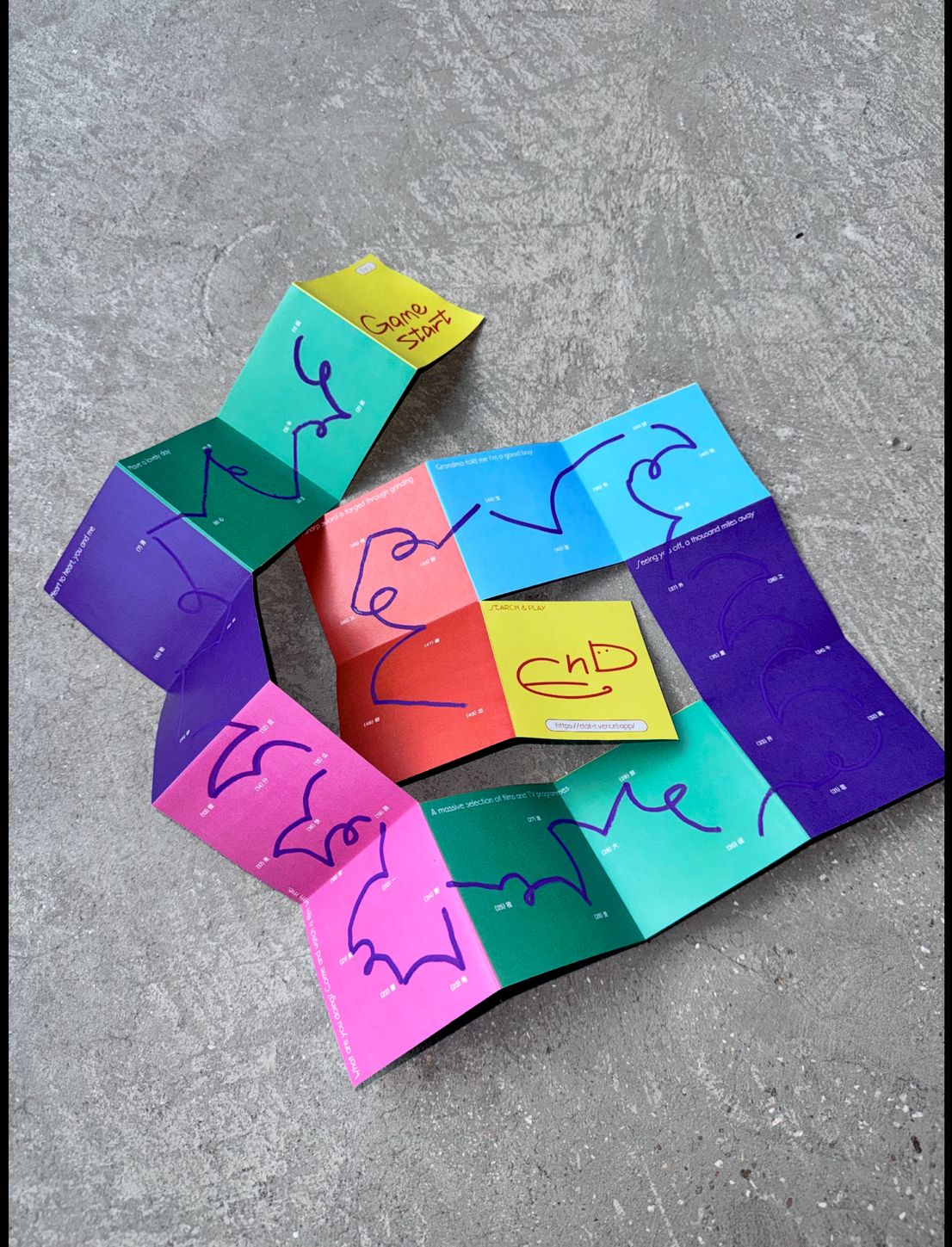









GRAPHIC MAZE


Game Start
Your a baby boy
Grandma told me I'm a good boy
/SEARCH & PLAY
https://dot-i.vercel.app/

Dialogue with Jazmin Morris

The designer's role	The designer organises relations, rules and possibilities rather than controlling every graphic form.
The research shift	My enquiry moved from individual interaction towards relational systems in which participants act through one another's traces.
Next stage	I will continue through relational experiments and conversations with participants, examining whether another person's trace feels like collaboration, restriction or authorship.

How can a designer construct a system in which participants generate meaning through one another's traces?



Chang, S. (2026) 'we were online'. Available at: https://wewere.online/ (Accessed: 22 September 2026).

Enquiry

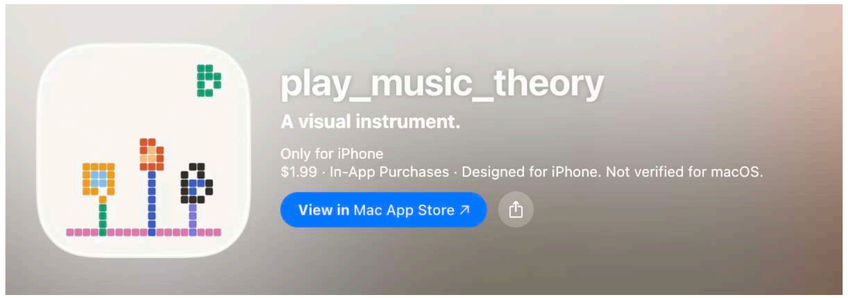
How can a designer construct a system in which participants generate graphic form and meaning through one another's traces?

The role of the designer has shifted from that of a "graphic creator" to that of an "organizer of relationships and rules."

The behavior of one participant becomes the condition for the next participant's action.

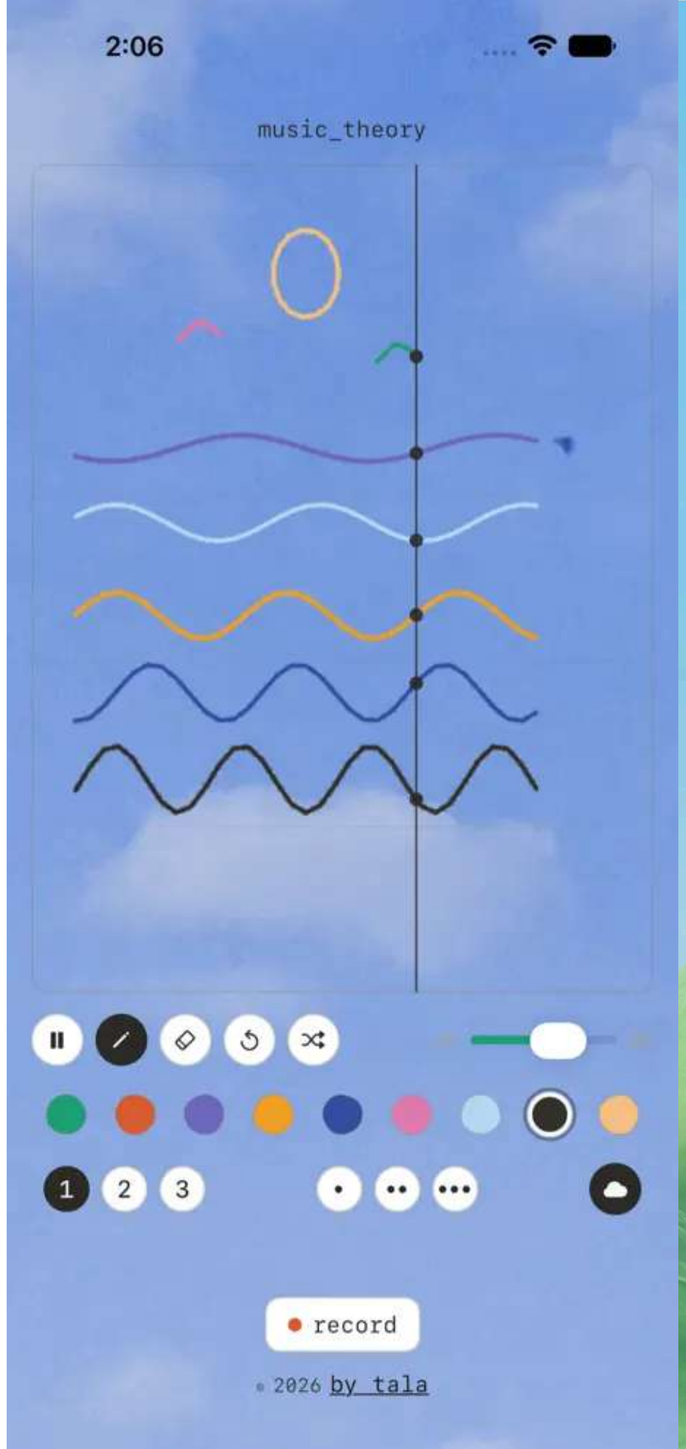
The focus of the study has expanded from the final image to the process by which meaning is generated among participants.

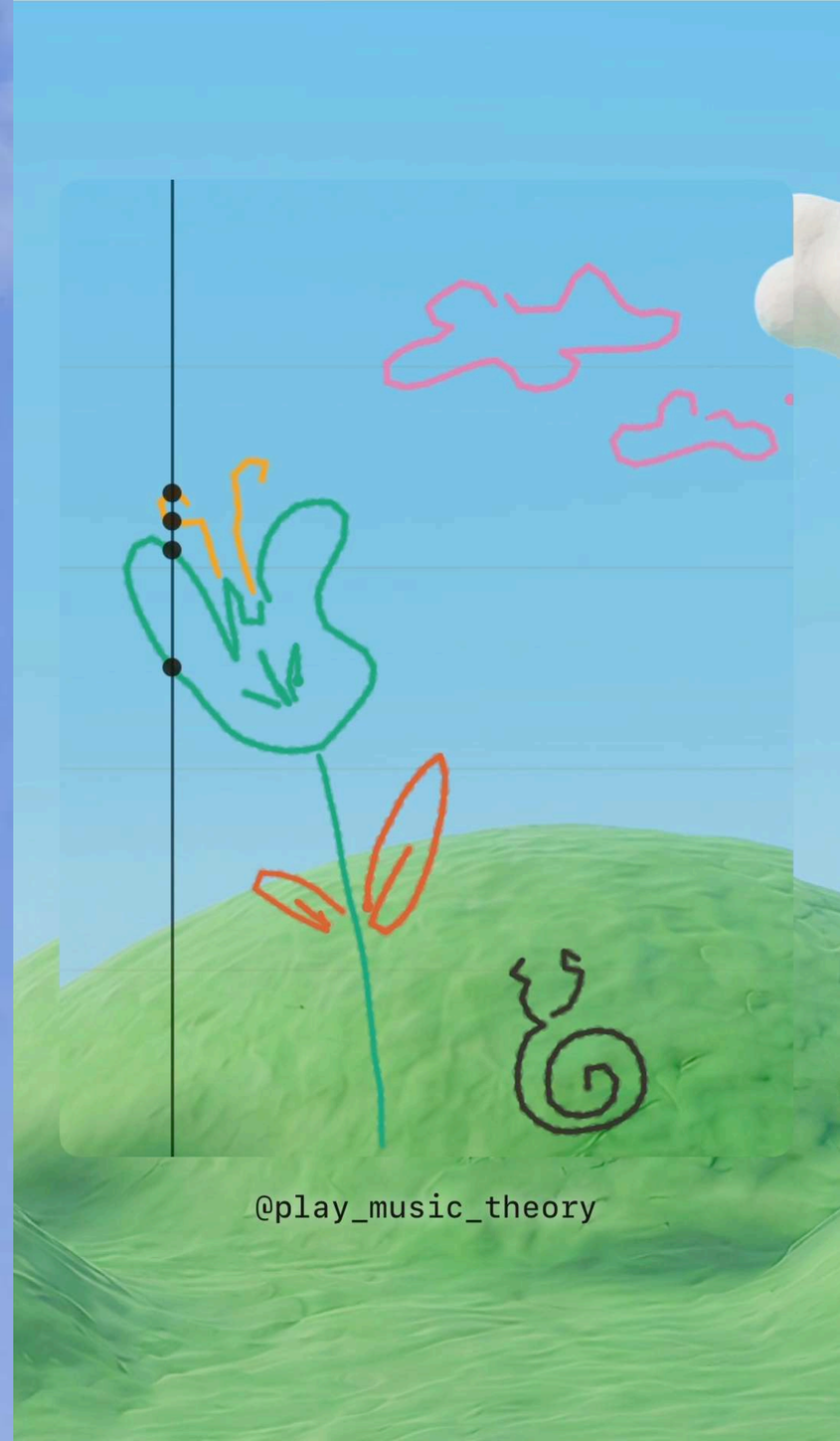
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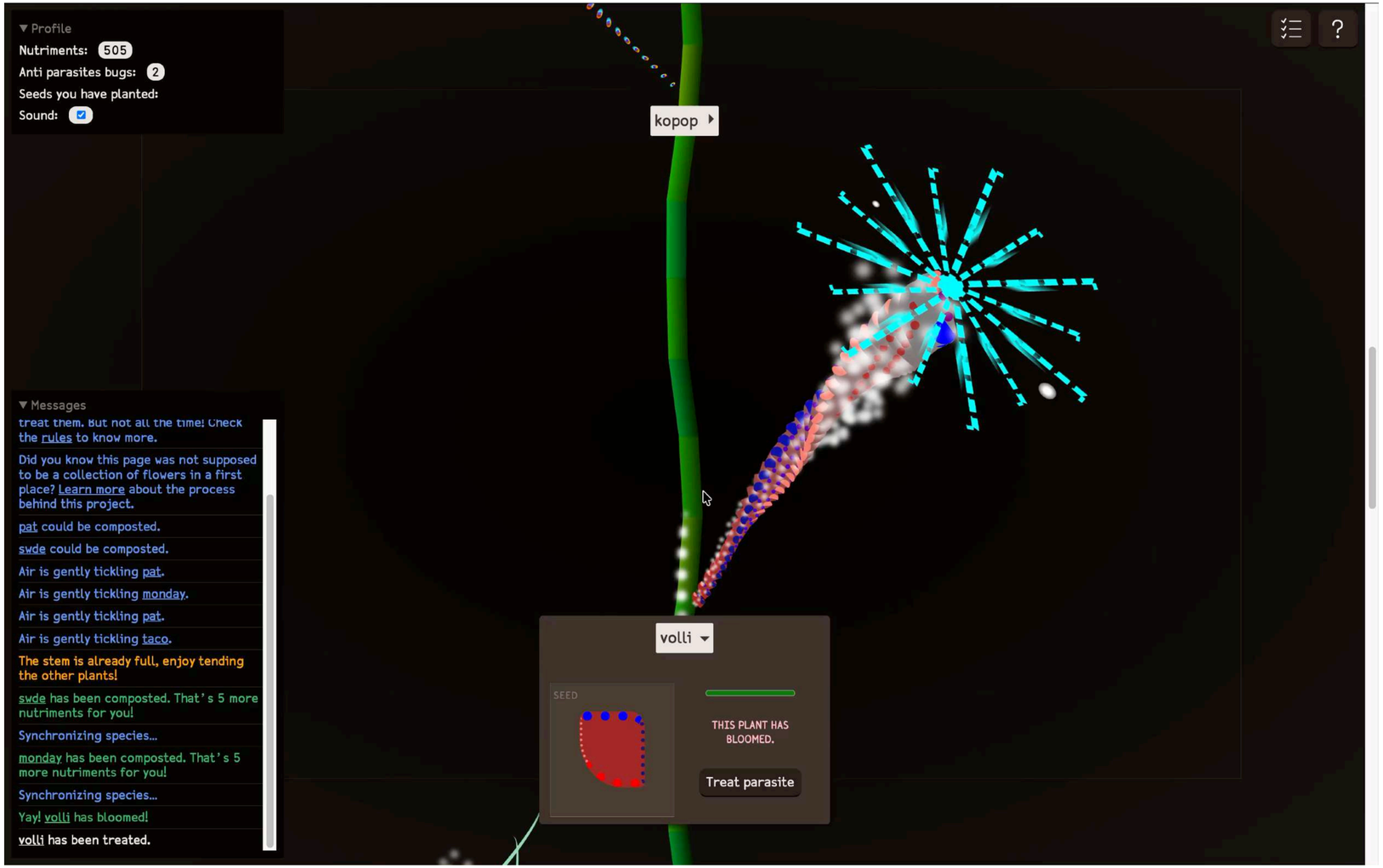
play_music_theory is a visual music experiment that transforms drawn lines and shapes into dynamic, editable sound. Instead of treating drawing as a static visual output, the project uses graphic elements as musical controls, allowing users to compose and modify sound through direct visual interaction.

The project demonstrates how visual forms can function as an interface for sound, creating a direct connection between gesture, shape and musical structure.





References



Carecore is an experimental web artwork about care, imperfection, and digital authorship. Developed in response to an AI-generated prototype that felt too generic, Bastide rebuilt the project by hand, embracing slow interaction, expressive imperfections, and "un-promptable" design choices.

The plants in Carecore aren't static illustrations; they're more like digital lifeforms that are constantly changing. Users can perform small actions on them, such as providing nutrients, treating parasites, continuing to nurture them, or eventually letting them enter a "compost" state.

https://raphaelbastide.com/carecore/

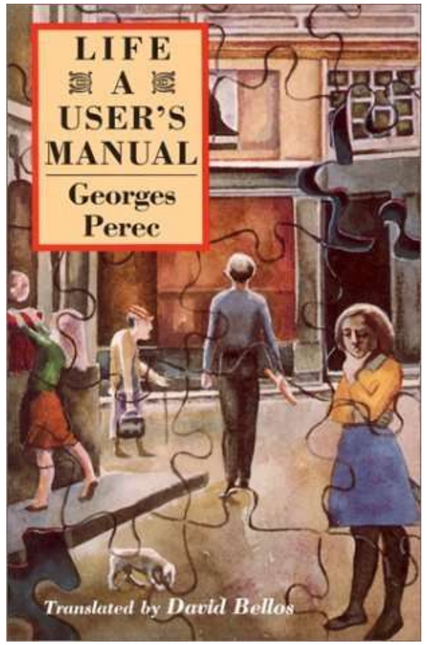
Enquiry

When designers relinquish direct control over the visual outcome
and instead design a set of rules and structures,
Can graphics produce meaning through the participants' behaviours?

The role of the designer has shifted from that of a “graphic creator” to that of an “organizer of relationships and rules.”

The behavior of one participant becomes the condition for the next participant’s action.

The focus of the study has expanded from the final image to the process by which meaning is generated among participants.



Life, a user's manual
by Perec, Georges, 1936–1982

Yesterday, I learned about the constrained writing method used by Georges Perec, a member of the French experimental literary group Oulipo. While writing Life: A User's Manual, he established a system for organizing space, chapter order, and the combination of materials, and then, through the act of writing, allowed these materials to form a story. This gave me a more concrete starting point.

The structure of the entire novel stems from a pre-established system of rules and constraints. This is very similar to the subject I wish to explore—both require designing a library of materials and rules for combining them first, and then creating specific works during the execution process.

The book is divided into ninety-nine chapters, depicting the lives, quirks, and personalities of the residents of a Parisian apartment building over the course of more than half a century, with the chronology deliberately scrambled. From the basement to the attic, readers are invited to wander through each floor, as if participating in a vast game of hide-and-seek, gradually delving into each room that holds its own memories.

For me, this is, in a sense, the law governing the modern novel: in order to have a sense of boundless imaginative power [...] it is necessary — or rather, it is sufficient — that not a single word should be chosen at random [...] but that, on the contrary, every word should be produced under the scrutiny of a rigorous filter, under the dictates of an absolute canon!
La Disparition, 1969

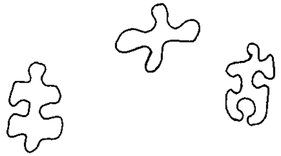


Georges Perec en 1978.
Photographie de Jeannelle

Perec, ou le jeu des contraintes

Il y a là, pour moi, quasi la Loi du roman d'aujourd'hui: pour avoir l'intuition d'un pouvoir imaginatif sans limitation [...] il faut, sinon il suffit qu'il n'y ait pas un mot qui soit fortuit [...] mais qu'à contrario tout mot soit produit sous la sanction d'un tamis contraignant, sous la sommation d'un canon absolu!
La Disparition, 1969

Foisonnement et diversité caractérisent l'œuvre de Georges Perec (1936-1982): théâtre, roman, essai, poésie, aucun genre ne semble lui échapper et lui-même affirme n'avoir « jamais écrit deux livres semblables. » Cependant cette versatilité apparente obéit à une démarche rigoureuse dont témoignent les minutieux programmes qui organisent la rédaction de ses œuvres. Soumettant son inspiration aux procédés les plus complexes, Perec cherche un nouveau langage à même de lui redonner la parole dont son enfance l'a privé. Victime de « l'Histoire avec sa grande Hache » (son père est mort au front en 40 et sa mère en déportation en 43), l'écrivain Perec s'est en effet construit sur le vide et l'absence. L'écriture va alors lui permettre de créer un monde à la mesure de ses manques et de ses doutes. Prenant pour postulats la contrainte et le jeu, il se libère du problème de l'expression de soi tout en réinventant à l'infini l'acte d'écrire. Mais au-delà d'une fabrique ludique de nouveaux types d'écriture, il s'agit de libérer l'imaginaire – et l'inconscient! – des formes existantes en s'écartant de tous les *topoï* classiques, les « grandes majuscules » comme il les nomme, tels que l'Inspiration, le Génie, la Vision du Monde, etc.

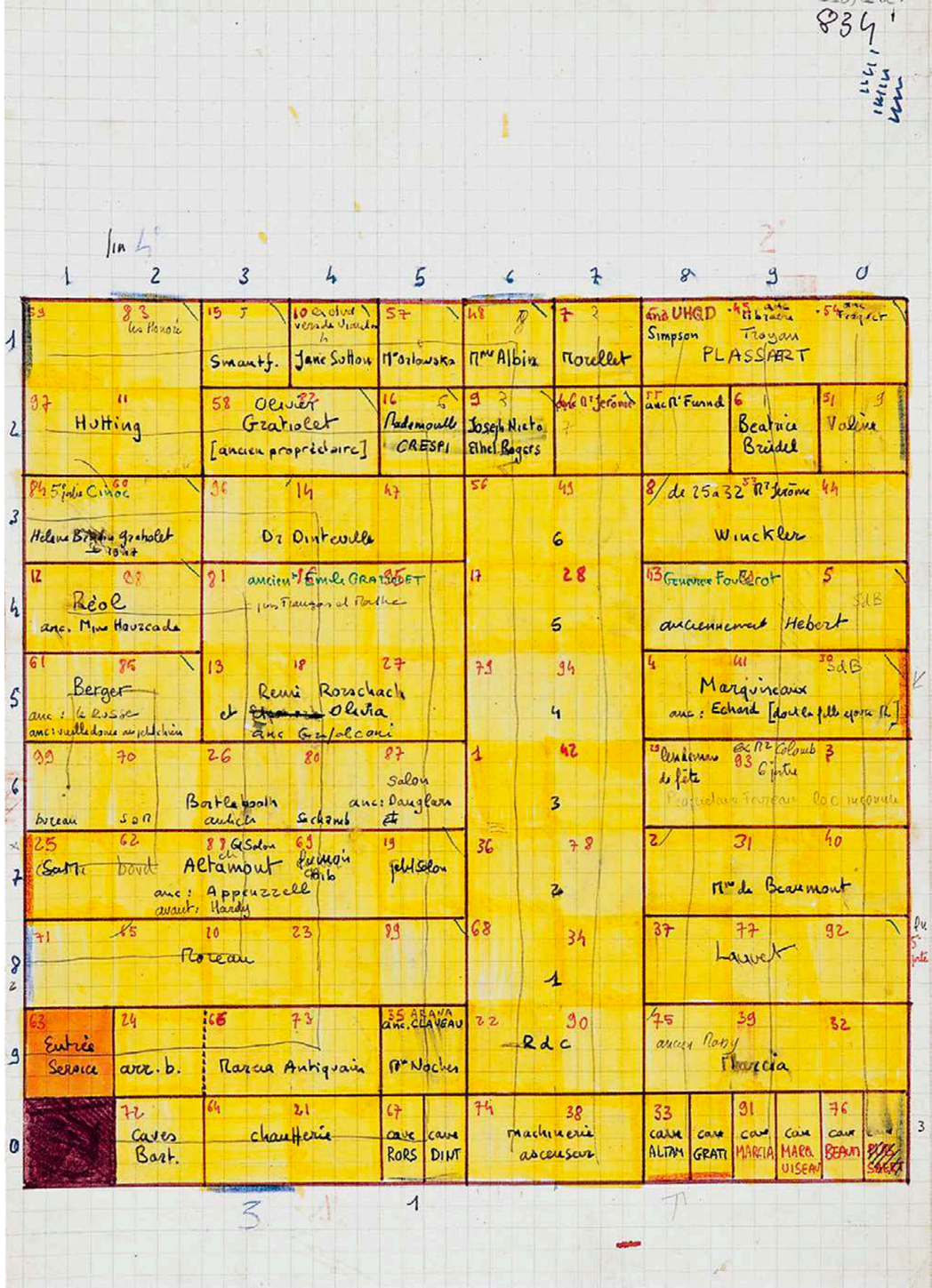


BnF

1. Structuring a building like a novel.

Perek divides the cross-section of an apartment building into a 10×10 grid. Each grid corresponds to a space within the building—such as a room, a staircase, or a basement. Each chapter of the novel corresponds to a single grid, with characters, objects, and the story unfolding across these different spaces. This novel has a total of 99 chapters; as you can see from the image, the box in the bottom left-hand corner has not been numbered as a chapter.

9F	59 于汀	83 于汀	15 斯莫特夫	10 萨顿	57 奥尔洛弗斯	48 阿尔班	7	52 普拉沙埃	45 普拉沙埃	54 普拉沙埃
8F	97 于汀	11 于汀	58 格拉蒂奥莱	82 格拉蒂奥莱	16 克雷斯比	9 尼埃多罗杰斯	46 热罗姆	55 弗雷斯纳尔	6 德博蒙外孙女	51 瓦莱纳
7F	84 西诺	60 西诺	96 丹特维尔	14 丹特维尔	47 丹特维尔	56 楼道	49 楼道	8 温克勒	53 温克勒	44 温克勒
6F	12 雷奥尔	98 雷奥尔	81 罗尔沙斯	86 罗尔沙斯	95 罗尔沙斯	17 楼道	28 楼道	43 富勒罗	50 富勒罗	5 富勒罗
5F	61 贝尔热	85 贝尔热	13 罗尔沙斯	18 罗尔沙斯	27 罗尔沙斯	79 楼道	94 楼道	4 马尔基佐	41 马尔基佐	30 马尔基佐
4F	99 巴特尔布思	70 巴特尔布思	26 巴特尔布思	80 巴特尔布思	87 巴特尔布思	1 楼道	42 楼道	29 富罗	93 富罗	3 富罗
3F	25 阿尔塔蒙	62 阿尔塔蒙	88 阿尔塔蒙	69 阿尔塔蒙	19 阿尔塔蒙	36 楼道	78 楼道	2 德博蒙	31 德博蒙	40 德博蒙
2F	71 莫罗	65 莫罗	20 莫罗	23 莫罗	89 莫罗	68 楼道	34 楼道	37 卢韦	77 卢韦	92 卢韦
1F	63 后门	24 马西亚	66 马西亚	73 马西亚	35 门房	22 门厅	90 门厅	75 马西亚	39 马西亚	32 马西亚
B1		72 地下室	64 锅炉房	21 锅炉房	67 地下室	74 电梯	38 电梯	33 地下室	91 地下室	76 地下室

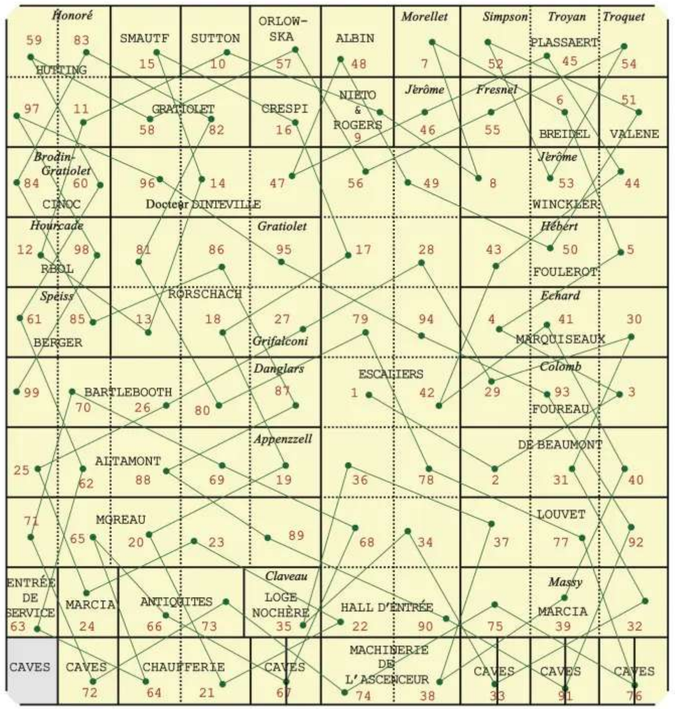


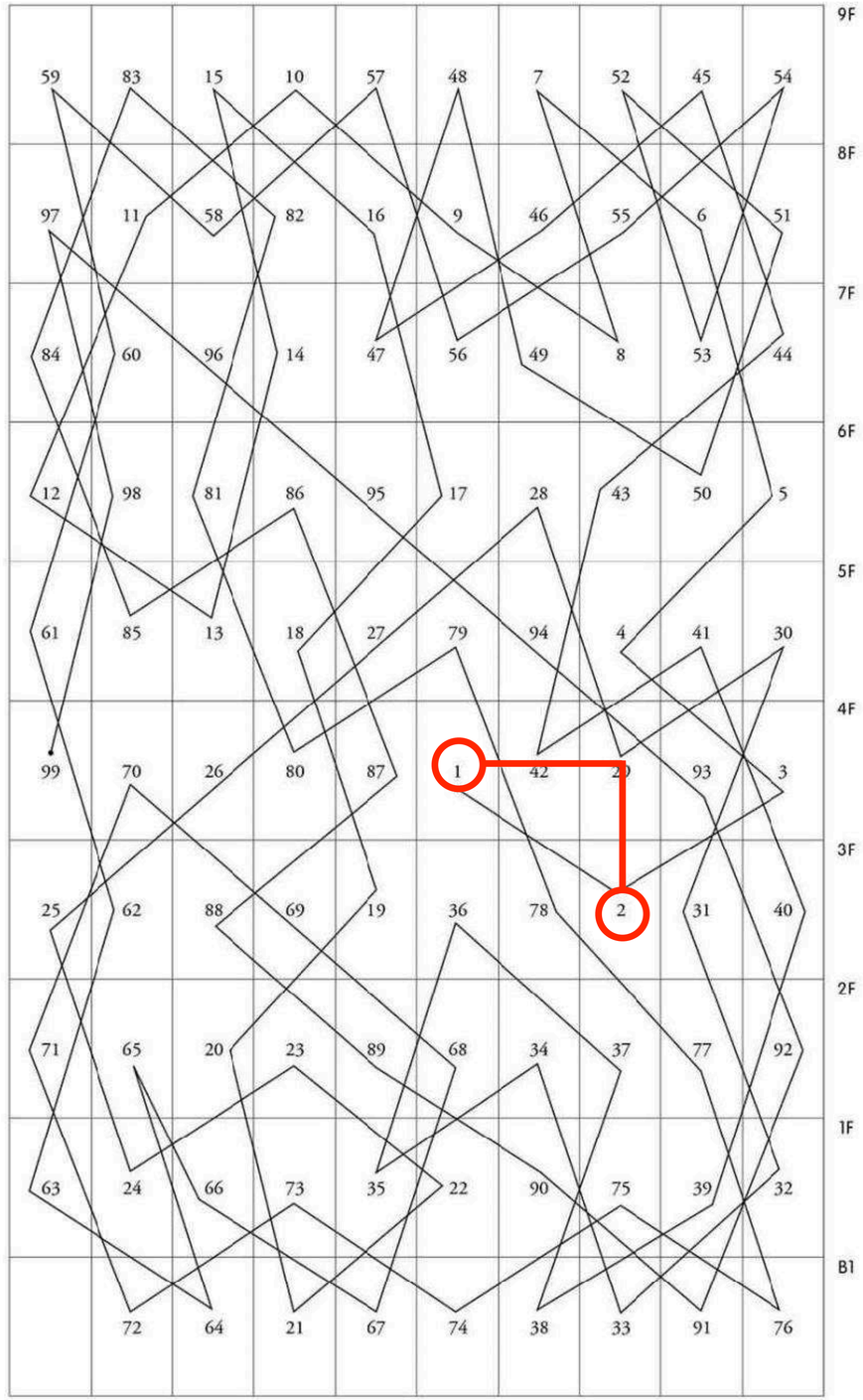
Floor Plan of an Apartment Building

2. Arrange the order of the chapters using the knight's move in chess

Once the grid has been established, the novel does not present the stories unfolding within the building in a left–to–right, top–to–bottom sequence. Perek adopts the movement pattern of a chess knight (two squares horizontally and one vertically, or one square horizontally and two vertically) to determine the sequence of rooms depicted in each chapter.

Take the first chapter, for example: Perek chooses to begin with the corridor, and the second chapter is situated two squares to the right and one square down from the first chapter.





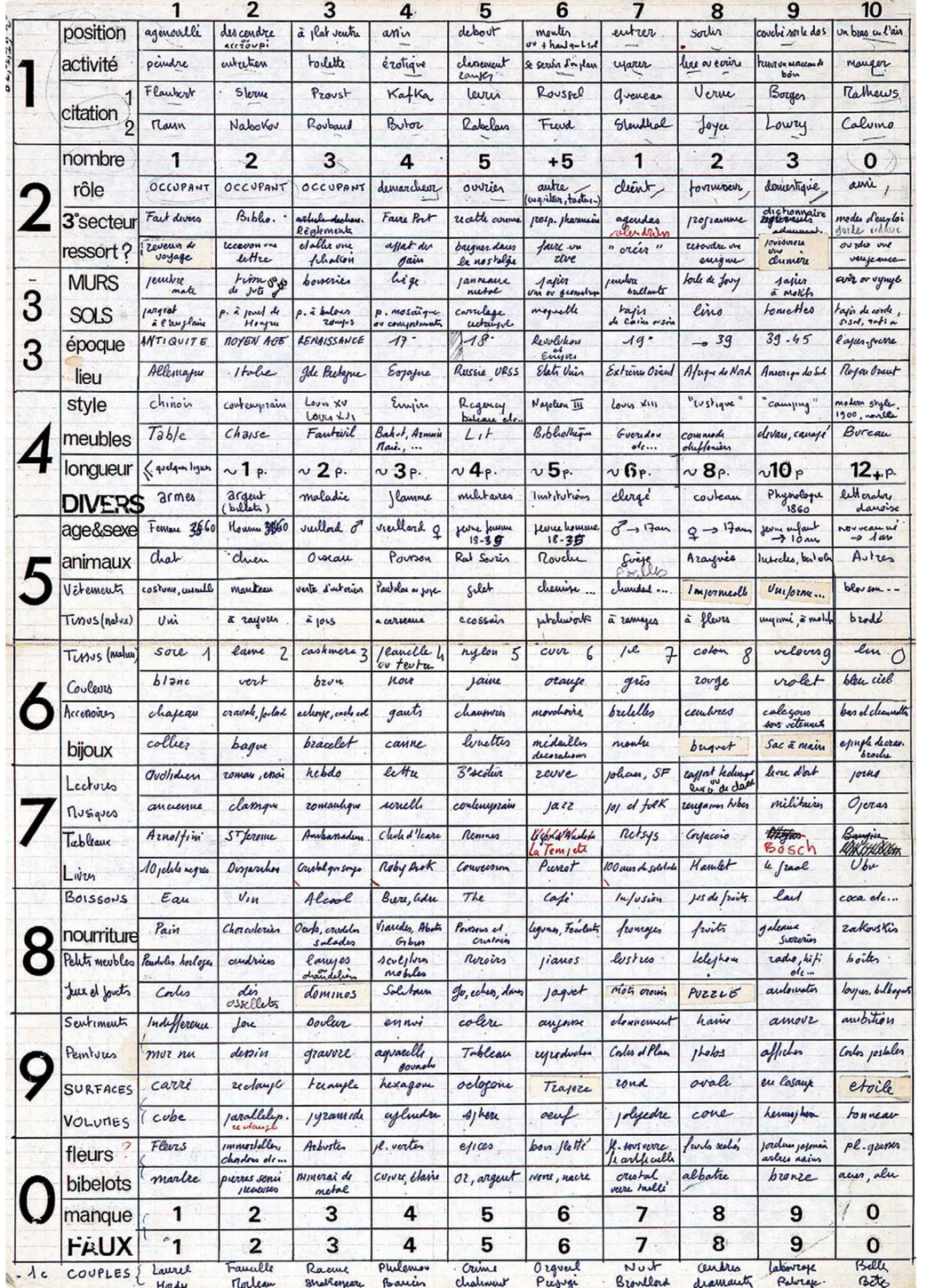
3. Create a list of materials that can be reused

Before writing, Perec drew up a list comprising 42 categories, each containing 10 items, totalling 420 items. The content covered characters, activities, furniture, colours, emotions, literary references and so on, and also included operational instructions such as ‘omission’ and ‘substitution’. Each chapter of the book derives its constraints from this list.

For example, a chapter might require references to a particular piece of furniture, a particular emotion and a particular writer all at the same time. The writer’s task is to establish concrete relationships between these elements within the text. The material may take the form of events as they unfold, or it may be incorporated into memories, paintings, books or characters’ narratives.

Group	Category	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Position	Kneeling	Descending / crouching	Lying face down	Sitting	Standing	Ascending / above ground	Entering	Leaving	Lying on back	One arm raised
	Activity	Painting	Conversation / maintenance*	Washing / dressing	Erotic activity	Sorting / tidying	Using a plan	Repairing	Reading / writing	Holding a piece of wood	Eating
	Quotation 1	Flaubert	Sterne	Proust	Kafka	Leiris	Roussel	Queneau	Verne	Borges	Mathews
	Quotation 2	Mann	Nabokov	Roubaud	Butor	Rabolais	Freud	Stendhal	Joyce	Lowry	Calvino
2	Number of people	1	2	3	4	5	More than 5	1	2	3	0
	Role	Occupant	Occupant	Occupant	Sales representative	Worker	Other (investigator, postman...)	Customer	Supplier	Servant	Friend
	Practical texts	News in brief	Bibliography*	Dictionary entry / regulations	Announcement	Recipe	Pharmaceutical leaflet	Diary / calendar	Programme	Dictionary / catalogue*	Instructions / guide / handbook
	Plot impetus	Returning from a trip	Receiving a letter	Establishing a lineage	Desire for gain	Nostalgia	Having a dream	Creating	Solving a puzzle	Pursuing a chimera	Plotting revenge
3	Walls	Matt paint	Jute fabric, etc.	Wood panelling	Cork	Metal panels	Plain / geometric wallpaper	Gloss paint	Toile de Jouy	Patterned wallpaper	Leather / vinyl
	Floors	Strip parquet	Chevron parquet	Herringbone parquet	Mosaic / panel parquet	Rectangular tiles	Fitted carpet	Wool / silk rug	Linoleum	Terracotta tiles	Rope / sisal / raffia rug
	Period	Antiquity	Middle Ages	Renaissance	17th century	18th century	Revolution / Empire	19th century	Before 1939	1939–1945	Post-war
	Place	Germany	Italy	Great Britain	Spain	Russia / USSR	United States	Far East	North Africa	South America	Middle East

In this table, Perec has arranged the 420 elements he selected to construct his novel into groups of ten, which he will then distribute amongst the various rooms in the building. Each chapter must contain one element from each list.

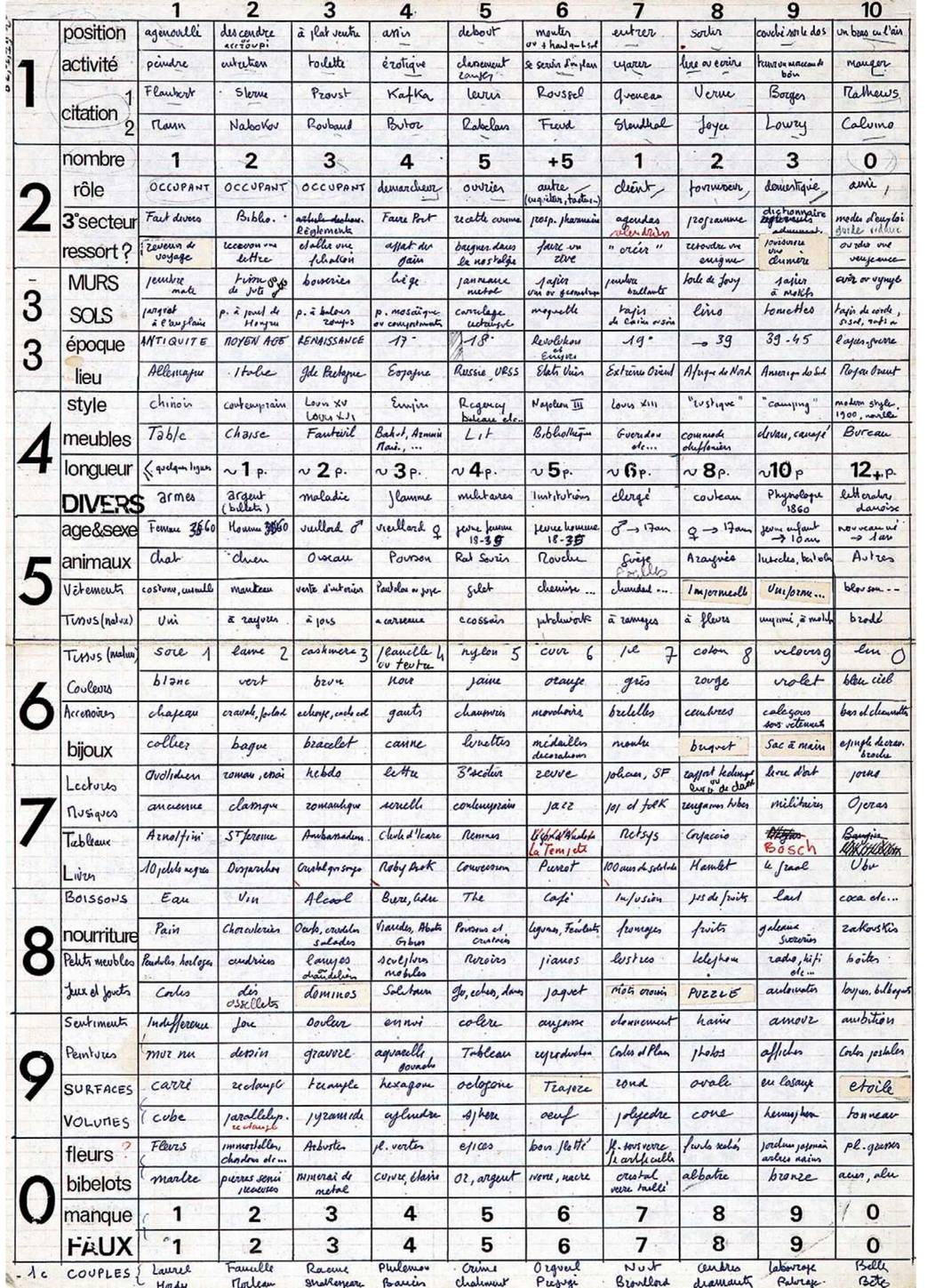


4. Allocating materials using mathematical rules

How were the different terms in the table assigned to different chapters? To avoid repetition of the material in the table across different chapters, Perec employed the orthogonal Latin square combination rule.

This can be understood as a pre–arranged pairing table. For example, five types of objects and five types of animals yield 25 possible combinations. Perek employed a system on a much larger scale. Once the coordinates of a room had been determined, the corresponding number could be looked up in the allocation table; this number was then substituted with the material to determine the requirements for that chapter.

Within this writing framework, there are two distinct sets of rules: the ‘horse–step’ route determines the order of the chapters, whilst the allocation table determines which elements are used in each chapter.

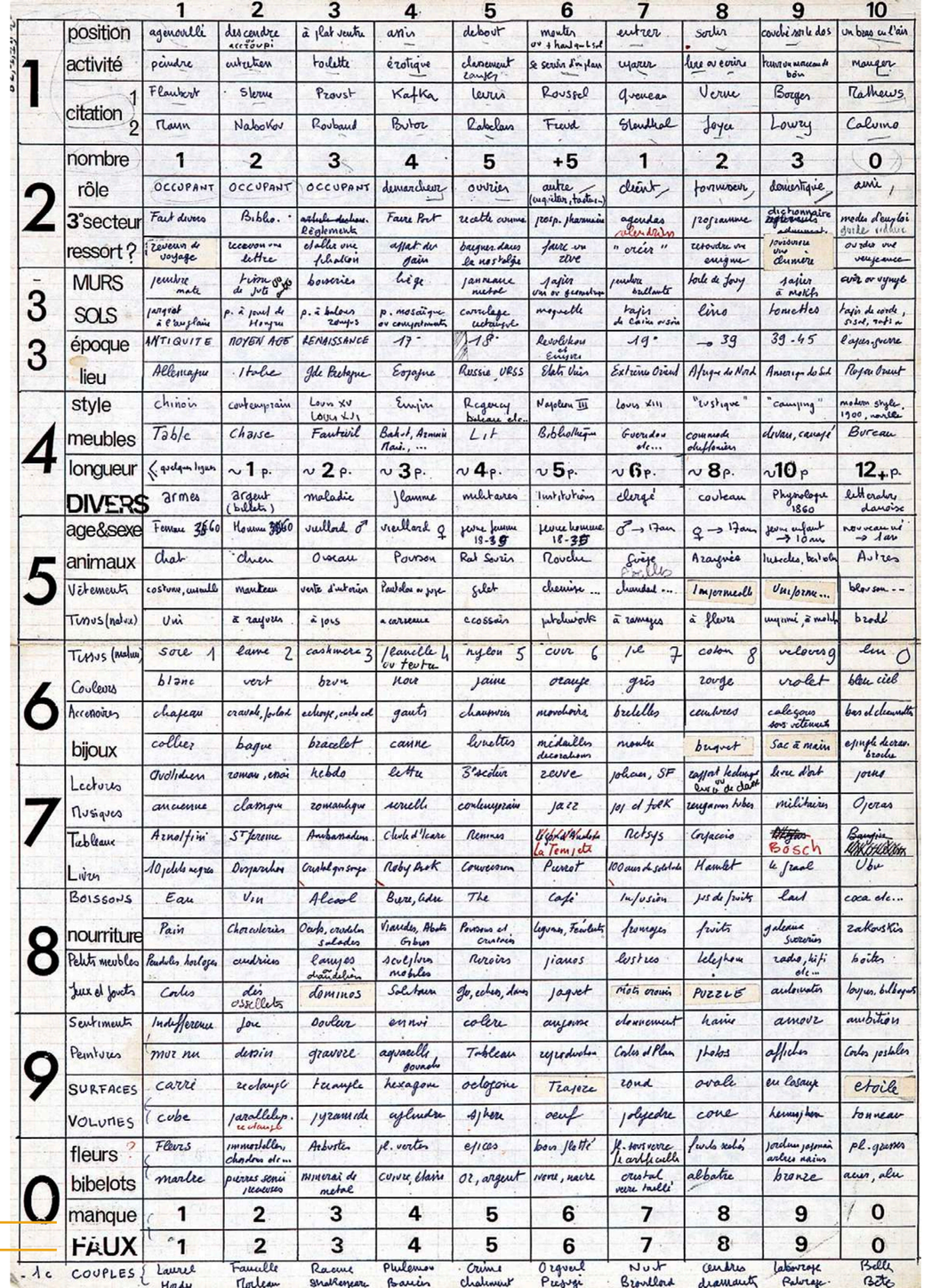


5. Retain deviations within the rules

Perek also incorporated ‘omission’ and ‘substitution’ into the system, allowing certain materials that should have appeared to be omitted or replaced by other materials.

For example, in the records for Chapter 4 compiled by the researcher, the originally intended materials included Italy and meat. However, the operational requirements for this chapter specified that an omission should be arranged in Group 8 and a substitution in Group 3; consequently, meat was omitted and Italy was replaced by England.

Thus, this system not only dictates what should appear, but also permits certain rules to be consciously altered. At the same time, the way in which the data in the tables is constructed into a narrative requires the reader to use their imagination to piece it together.



omission

substitution

Inspired by Perec's methodological approach to writing, I wanted to transform this system—rich in rules and full of charm—into a set of design guidelines, and adapt the book into a zine.
I began by reducing the 10×10 grid to 5×5, so that the 25 squares corresponded to 25 pictorial chapters. I then selected five categories from Perec's list: small furniture and objects, animals, colours, reading material, and games and toys. I provisionally chose five candidates for each category.
Next, using rules of pairing and rotation, I allocated five elements to each square, then determined the sequence of the zine's chapters by drawing a knight's move that covered all 25 squares without repetition.

For example, my Chapter 1 is located at coordinates (1,1), and the elements assigned to it are: a clock, a cat, the colour yellow, a daily newspaper and a pack of playing cards. The next chapter moves one square in the 'horse step' direction to (2,3), and its materials become: a telephone, a cat, red, a letter and a spinning top.

This list determines what elements will appear in the illustrations, but does not dictate how they must be arranged. I still have scope to be creative with the final composition. I still need to decide on the size, position, movement and interrelationships of the elements before organising them into images.

How does a room receive its materials?

A worked example from my 5×5 adaptation of Perec's method

1. OBJECT allocation grid

Read row 2, column 3.

	1	2	3	4	5
1	1	2	3	4	5
2	2	3	4	5	1
3	3	4	5	1	2
4	4	5	1	2	3
5	5	1	2	3	4

(2, 3) → 4 → Telephone

2. ANIMAL allocation grid

Read row 2, column 3.

	1	2	3	4	5
1	1	3	5	2	4
2	2	4	1	3	5
3	3	5	2	4	1
4	4	1	3	5	2
5	5	2	4	1	3

(2, 3) → 1 → Cat

3. Convert codes into materials

CODE	OBJECT	ANIMAL
1	Clock	Cat
2	Lamp	Dog
3	Mirror	Bird
4	Telephone	Fish
5	Box	Spider

CHAPTER 02 · ROOM (2, 3)

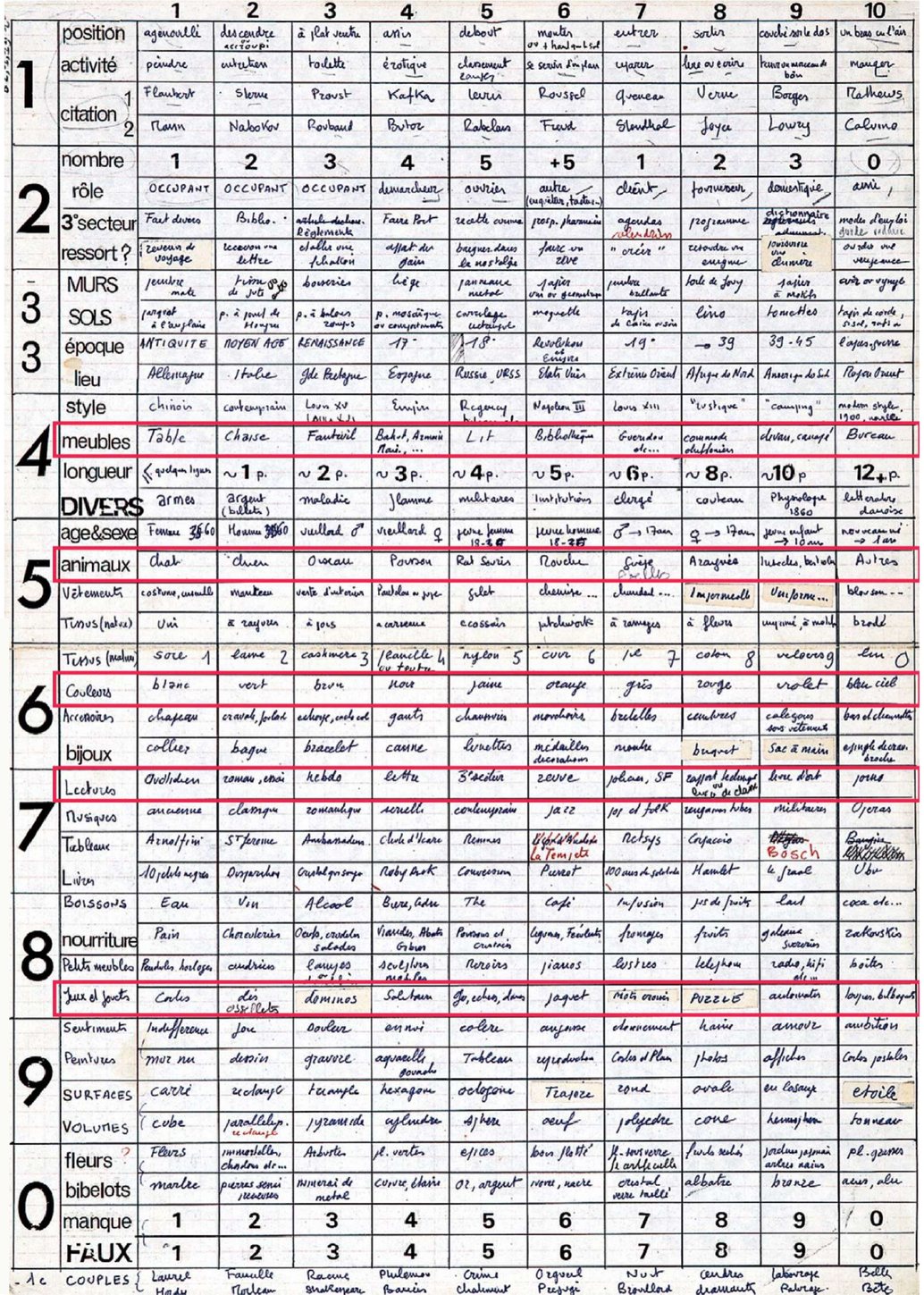
Telephone + Cat

Repeat the same lookup for the other three categories:

Colour: 2 → Red Reading: 3 → Letter Game / toy: 5 → Spinning top

Why these grids? Each code appears once per row and column.
Together, the two grids contain all 25 object–animal pairs exactly once. Individual elements repeat.

Knight's tour = chapter order. Allocation grids = chapter materials. The designer creates the composition.



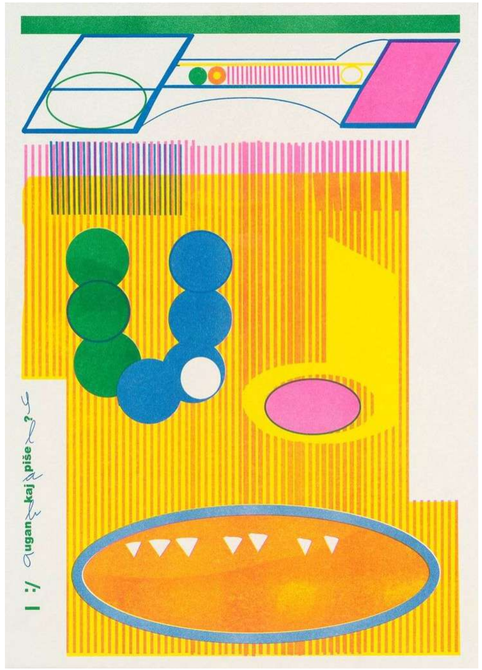
5×5 Visual Zine · 25 Element Combinations

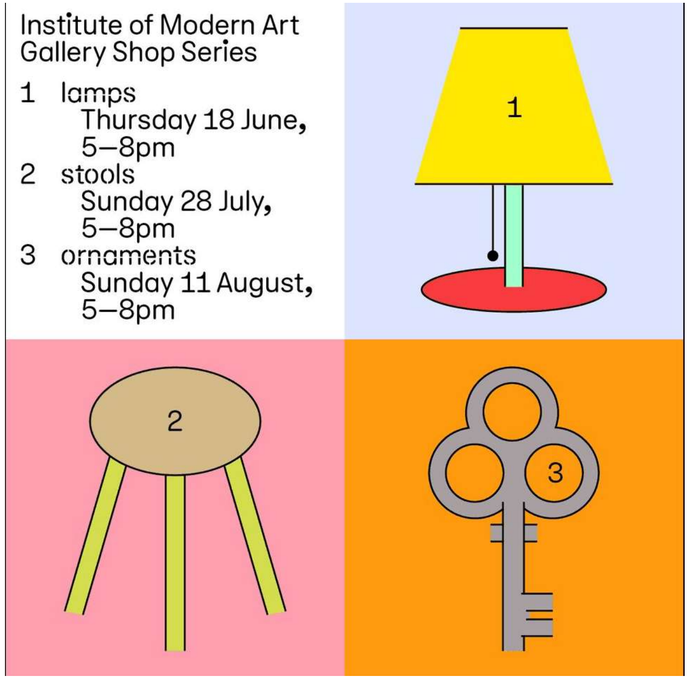
One cell per image chapter. Read in chapter order, from 1 to 25.

	1	2	3	4	5
1	**CHAPTER 01** Object: Clock Animal: Cat Colour: Yellow Reading: Daily newspaper Game / toy: Playing cards	**CHAPTER 12** Object: Lamp Animal: Bird Colour: Sky blue Reading: Art book Game / toy: Spinning top	**CHAPTER 25** Object: Mirror Animal: Spider Colour: White Reading: Novel Game / toy: Jigsaw puzzle	**CHAPTER 18** Object: Telephone Animal: Dog Colour: Black Reading: Technical report Game / toy: Chess	**CHAPTER 03** Object: Box Animal: Fish Colour: Red Reading: Letter Game / toy: Dice
2	**CHAPTER 22** Object: Lamp Animal: Dog Colour: White Reading: Novel Game / toy: Dice	**CHAPTER 17** Object: Mirror Animal: Fish Colour: Black Reading: Technical report Game / toy: Playing cards	**CHAPTER 02** Object: Telephone Animal: Cat Colour: Red Reading: Letter Game / toy: Spinning top	**CHAPTER 13** Object: Box Animal: Bird Colour: Yellow Reading: Daily newspaper Game / toy: Jigsaw puzzle	**CHAPTER 24** Object: Clock Animal: Spider Colour: Sky blue Reading: Art book Game / toy: Chess
3	**CHAPTER 11** Object: Mirror Animal: Bird Colour: Sky blue Reading: Letter Game / toy: Chess	**CHAPTER 08** Object: Telephone Animal: Spider Colour: White Reading: Daily newspaper Game / toy: Dice	**CHAPTER 23** Object: Box Animal: Dog Colour: Black Reading: Art book Game / toy: Playing cards	**CHAPTER 04** Object: Clock Animal: Fish Colour: Red Reading: Novel Game / toy: Spinning top	**CHAPTER 19** Object: Lamp Animal: Cat Colour: Yellow Reading: Technical report Game / toy: Jigsaw puzzle
4	**CHAPTER 16** Object: Telephone Animal: Fish Colour: Red Reading: Art book Game / toy: Jigsaw puzzle	**CHAPTER 21** Object: Box Animal: Cat Colour: Yellow Reading: Novel Game / toy: Chess	**CHAPTER 06** Object: Clock Animal: Bird Colour: Sky blue Reading: Technical report Game / toy: Dice	**CHAPTER 09** Object: Lamp Animal: Spider Colour: White Reading: Letter Game / toy: Playing cards	**CHAPTER 14** Object: Mirror Animal: Dog Colour: Black Reading: Daily newspaper Game / toy: Spinning top
5	**CHAPTER 07** Object: Box Animal: Spider Colour: Black Reading: Technical report Game / toy: Spinning top	**CHAPTER 10** Object: Clock Animal: Dog Colour: Red Reading: Letter Game / toy: Jigsaw puzzle	**CHAPTER 15** Object: Lamp Animal: Fish Colour: Yellow Reading: Daily newspaper Game / toy: Chess	**CHAPTER 20** Object: Mirror Animal: Cat Colour: Sky blue Reading: Art book Game / toy: Dice	**CHAPTER 05** Object: Telephone Animal: Bird Colour: White Reading: Novel Game / toy: Playing cards

Positions follow the source worksheet. Each cell lists an object, animal, colour, reading material and game / toy.

- How do designers organise the generation of visual forms by establishing complex and intriguing rules and constraints?
- How do pre-established rules and constraints influence designers' visual choices and creative processes?
- What similarities and differences do the same rules produce across different creative media?





Visual reference

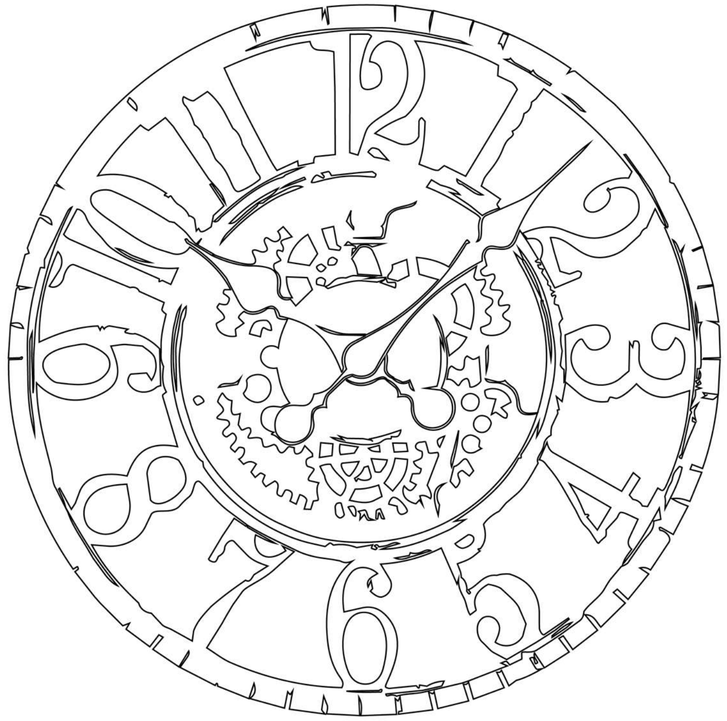


About the Book

The Third Room in the Top Row is an experimental illustrated publication in which content is generated through a set of rules. The project asks:

When the materials and reading sequence are predetermined, how can writers and designers still develop a plot, compose images, and give those materials new meaning?

The book consists of two parts: an illustrated novel, and an account of the methods and research behind it. Readers are invited to read both the story and the rules that shape it.



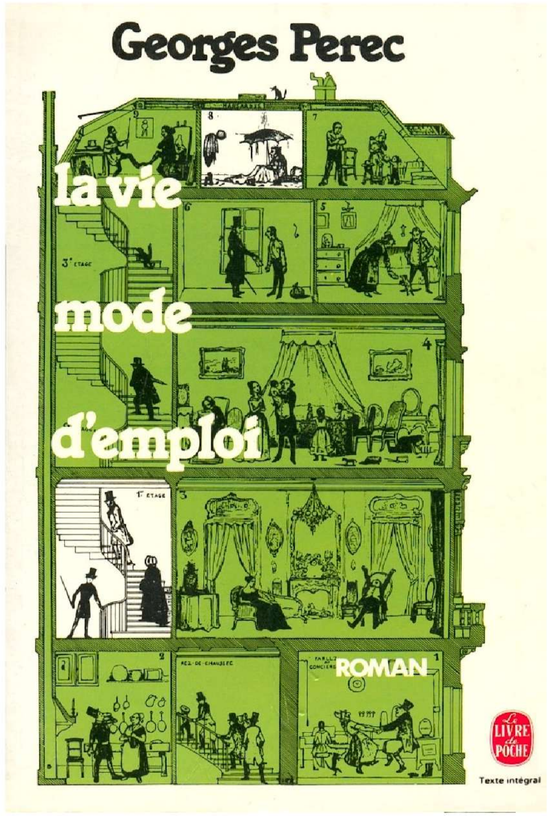


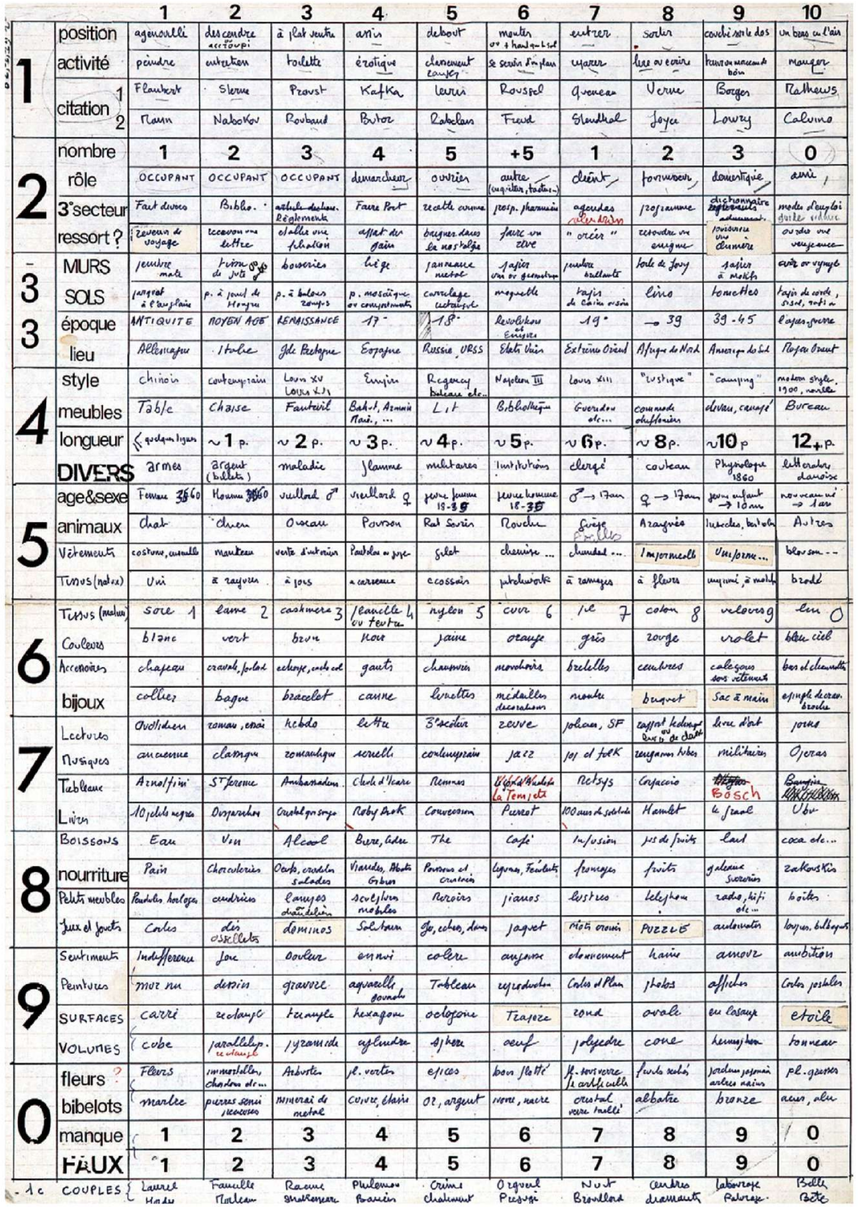
Inspiration

The project draws inspiration from the French experimental literary group Oulipo and Georges Perec's Life: A User's Manual.

Perec organised the spaces within a building, the sequence of chapters, and the allocation of elements into a writing system, then used writing to establish connections between characters, objects, and events.

Drawing on this approach, I constructed a 5 × 5 framework of elements to tell a new story, exploring how existing literary constraints can be translated into methods of visual design.

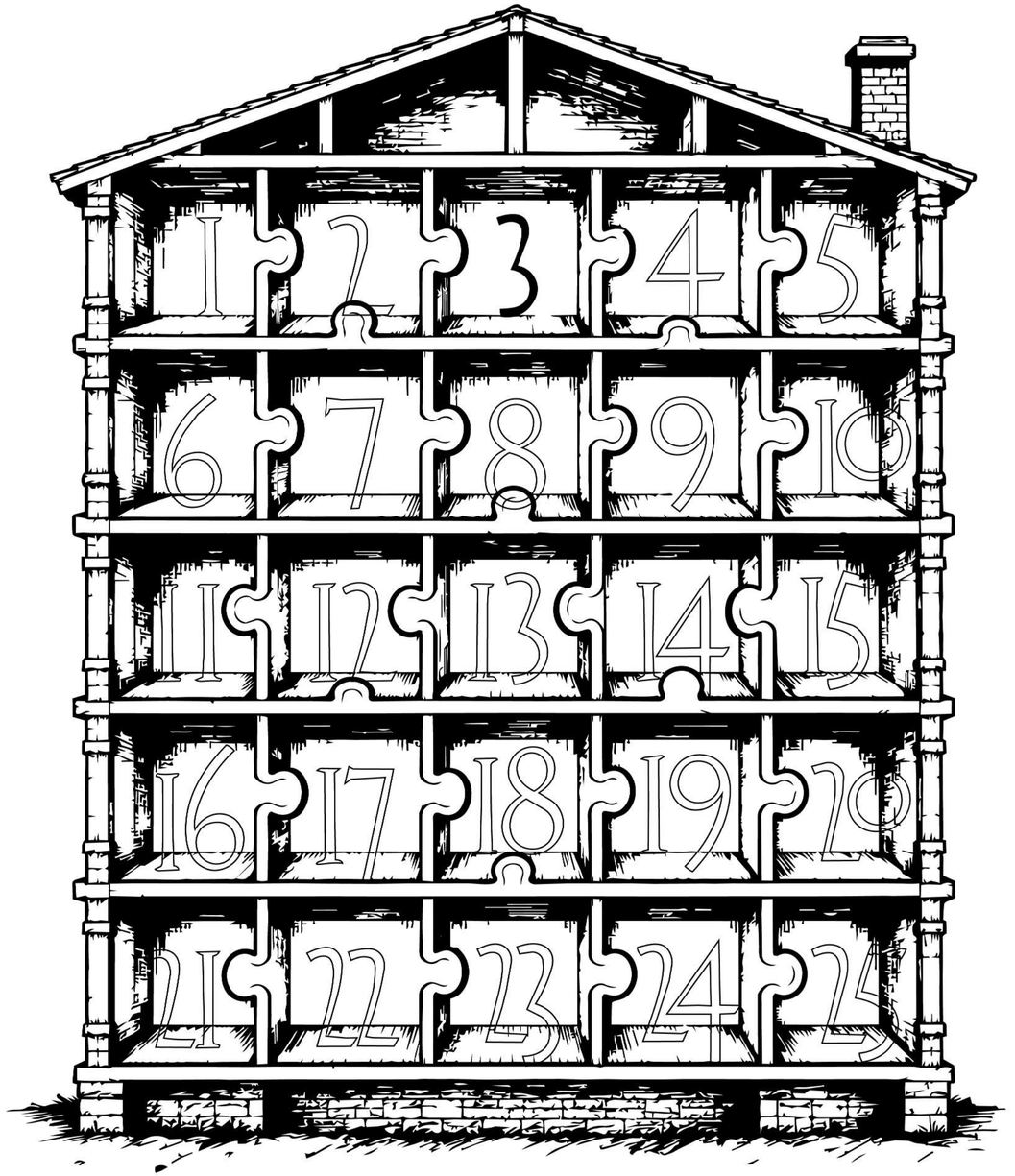




Creative Approach

The novel follows a daughter searching for the final piece of a jigsaw puzzle left by her father.
She moves through 25 spaces in an apartment building, piecing together a new understanding of her father through neighbours' accounts, unsent letters, old photographs, and everyday objects. Along the way, she also discovers what happened in the building after she left.
At the end of the story, she returns to "the third room in the top row" and discovers that the missing piece is a small mirror. Through its reflection, her own image becomes part of the work her father left behind.

The elements assigned by the rules serve both as visual components in the illustrations and as narrative devices.
Telephones and letters carry unfinished conversations; daily newspapers and technical reports reveal discrepancies between records and reality; mirrors and jigsaw puzzles connect memory, observation, and self-understanding.
Recurring elements take on different meanings within each chapter, forming a network of clues about the father and daughter.



Constructing the Rules

I began with a 5 × 5 grid, assigning each of its 25 positions to an illustrated chapter and using a chess knight's route to determine the chapter sequence. I then selected five categories from Perec's lists—objects, animals, colours, reading materials, and games and toys—with five possible elements in each category.

Each chapter is assigned one required element from each of the five categories. The allocation rules ensure that every element appears five times across the 25 spaces, while every possible pairing of "objects and animals" and "reading materials and games and toys" occurs once. Colours are distributed so that none repeats within any row or column. This arrangement recombines the same elements with different materials across the chapters, providing varied starting points for the story and illustrations.

The rules establish a starting point for creation. Character relationships, plot development, the use of the assigned elements, and the composition of the illustrations remain decisions I make through writing and design. In this way, the project explores both the constraints imposed by rules and the author's freedom to interpret them.

	1	2	3	4	5
1	**Chapter 1** Object: Clock Animal: Cat Colour: Yellow Reading: Daily newspaper Game: Playing cards	**Chapter 12** Object: Lamp Animal: Bird Colour: Sky blue Reading: Art book Game: Spinning top	**Chapter 25** Object: Mirror Animal: Spider Colour: Green Reading: Novel Game: Jigsaw puzzle	**Chapter 18** Object: Telephone Animal: Dog Colour: Purple Reading: Technical report Game: Chess	**Chapter 3** Object: Box Animal: Fish Colour: Red Reading: Letter Game: Dice
2	**Chapter 22** Object: Lamp Animal: Dog Colour: Green Reading: Novel Game: Dice	**Chapter 17** Object: Mirror Animal: Fish Colour: Purple Reading: Technical report Game: Playing cards	**Chapter 2** Object: Telephone Animal: Cat Colour: Red Reading: Letter Game: Spinning top	**Chapter 13** Object: Box Animal: Bird Colour: Yellow Reading: Daily newspaper Game: Jigsaw puzzle	**Chapter 24** Object: Clock Animal: Spider Colour: Sky blue Reading: Art book Game: Chess
3	**Chapter 11** Object: Mirror Animal: Bird Colour: Sky blue Reading: Letter Game: Chess	**Chapter 8** Object: Telephone Animal: Spider Colour: Green Reading: Daily newspaper Game: Dice	**Chapter 23** Object: Box Animal: Dog Colour: Purple Reading: Art book Game: Playing cards	**Chapter 4** Object: Clock Animal: Fish Colour: Red Reading: Novel Game: Spinning top	**Chapter 19** Object: Lamp Animal: Cat Colour: Yellow Reading: Technical report Game: Jigsaw puzzle
4	**Chapter 16** Object: Telephone Animal: Fish Colour: Red Reading: Art book Game: Jigsaw puzzle	**Chapter 21** Object: Box Animal: Cat Colour: Yellow Reading: Novel Game: Chess	**Chapter 6** Object: Clock Animal: Bird Colour: Sky blue Reading: Technical report Game: Dice	**Chapter 9** Object: Lamp Animal: Spider Colour: Green Reading: Letter Game: Playing cards	**Chapter 14** Object: Mirror Animal: Dog Colour: Purple Reading: Daily newspaper Game: Spinning top
5	**Chapter 7** Object: Box Animal: Spider Colour: Purple Reading: Technical report Game: Spinning top	**Chapter 10** Object: Clock Animal: Dog Colour: Red Reading: Letter Game: Jigsaw puzzle	**Chapter 15** Object: Lamp Animal: Fish Colour: Yellow Reading: Daily newspaper Game: Chess	**Chapter 20** Object: Mirror Animal: Cat Colour: Sky blue Reading: Art book Game: Dice	**Chapter 5** Object: Telephone Animal: Bird Colour: Green Reading: Novel Game: Playing cards

Content and Book Format

The book consists of two parts. The first invites readers to follow the novel through 25 rooms, with illustrations developed around each chapter's events and assigned elements. The second presents the project's references, sources of inspiration, and allocation rules. Readers enter the story from the front, then turn the book over to explore the methods from the back.

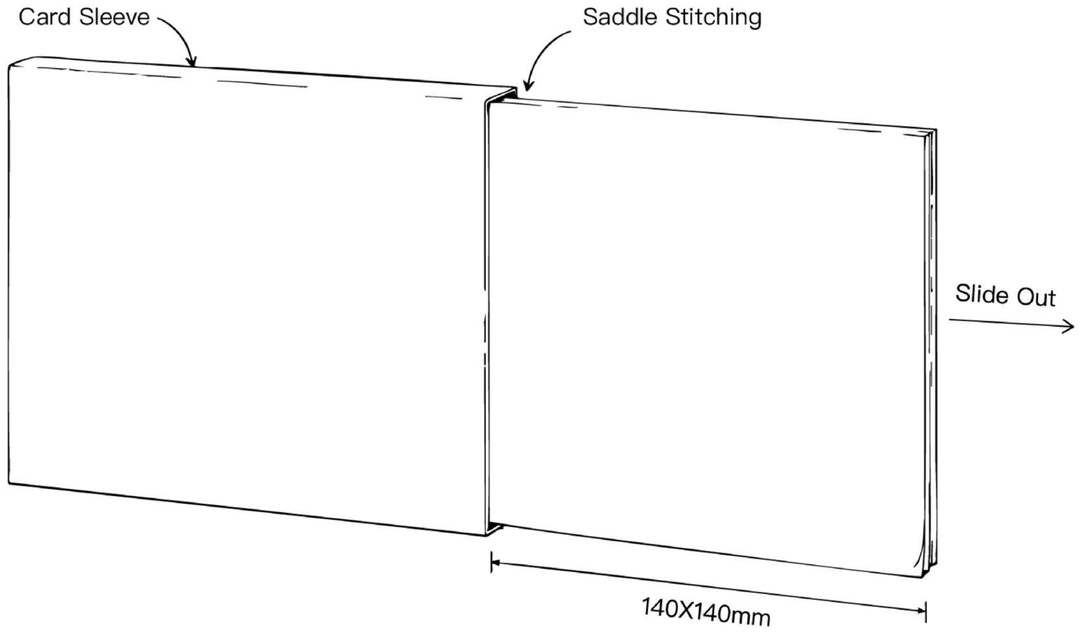
These two ways of reading meet within the book. The first reading follows the search for the missing puzzle piece; subsequent readings reveal connections between the materials, sequence, and visual choices. Through this book, I hope to make the rules themselves something that can be read, discussed, and designed.

Book Design and Binding

Dimensions: 140 × 140 mm

Paper: Coloured copier paper

Binding: Saddle stitching with a card slipcase from which the book slides out sideways



On the yellow wall, the clock was seven minutes slow.
The old gentleman slipped a playing card under a table leg to steady it.
The cat jumped onto the table and sat on that day's newspaper, neatly covering the word "Relocation."

She laid out the jigsaw puzzle her father had left behind. Twenty-five rooms, but only twenty-four pieces.
The gap was the third room in the top row, her old bedroom.



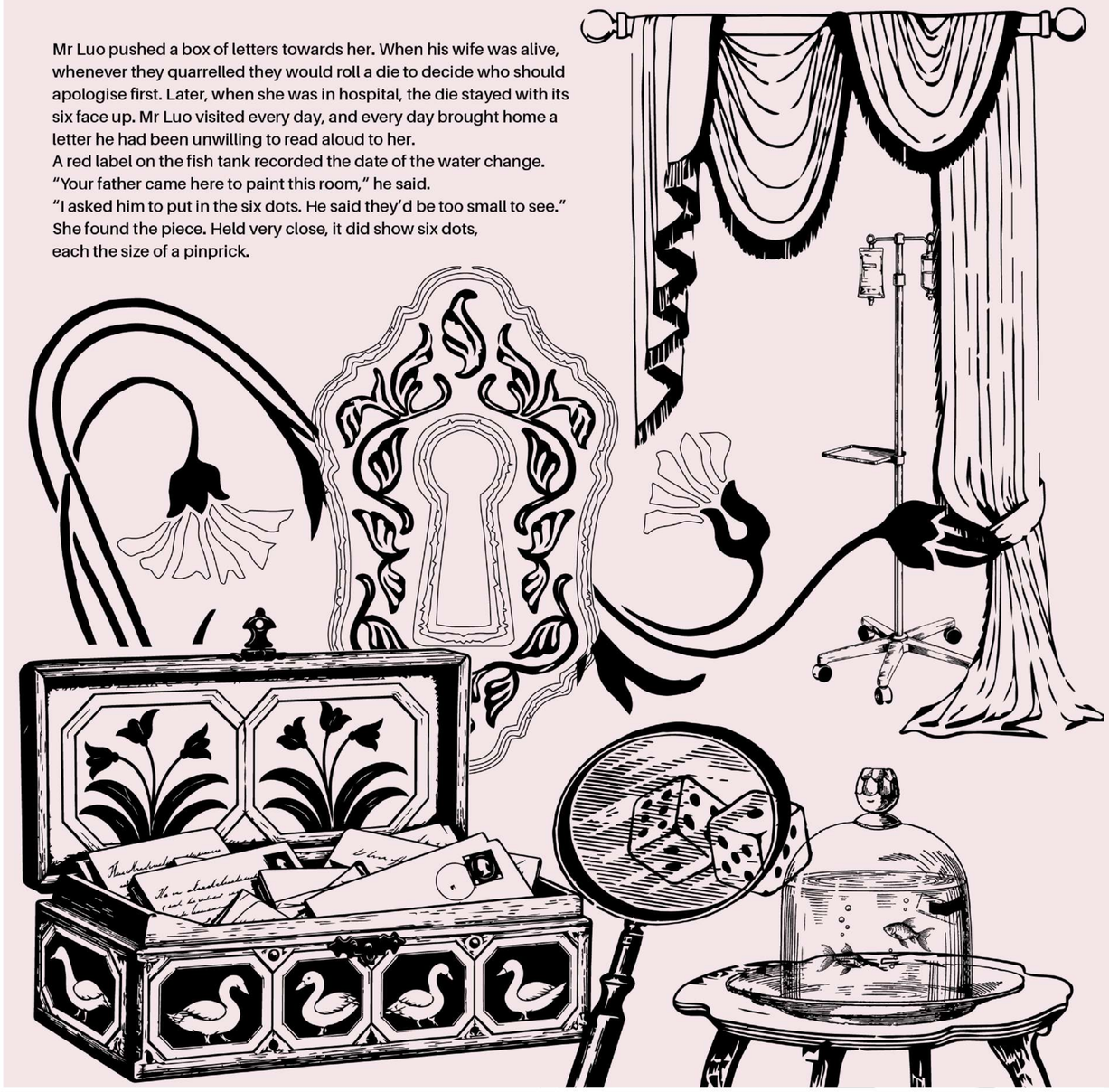
"Where did he put the last piece?"
The old gentleman pushed the card a little farther under the table leg.
"You'll have to ask the people in the building. His things were often in someone else's flat."

In the workroom her father had borrowed, a strip of red tape was still stuck to the telephone. On it was her number, long since disconnected. A cat lay curled beside the receiver. She could not tell whether it was the one she had just seen.

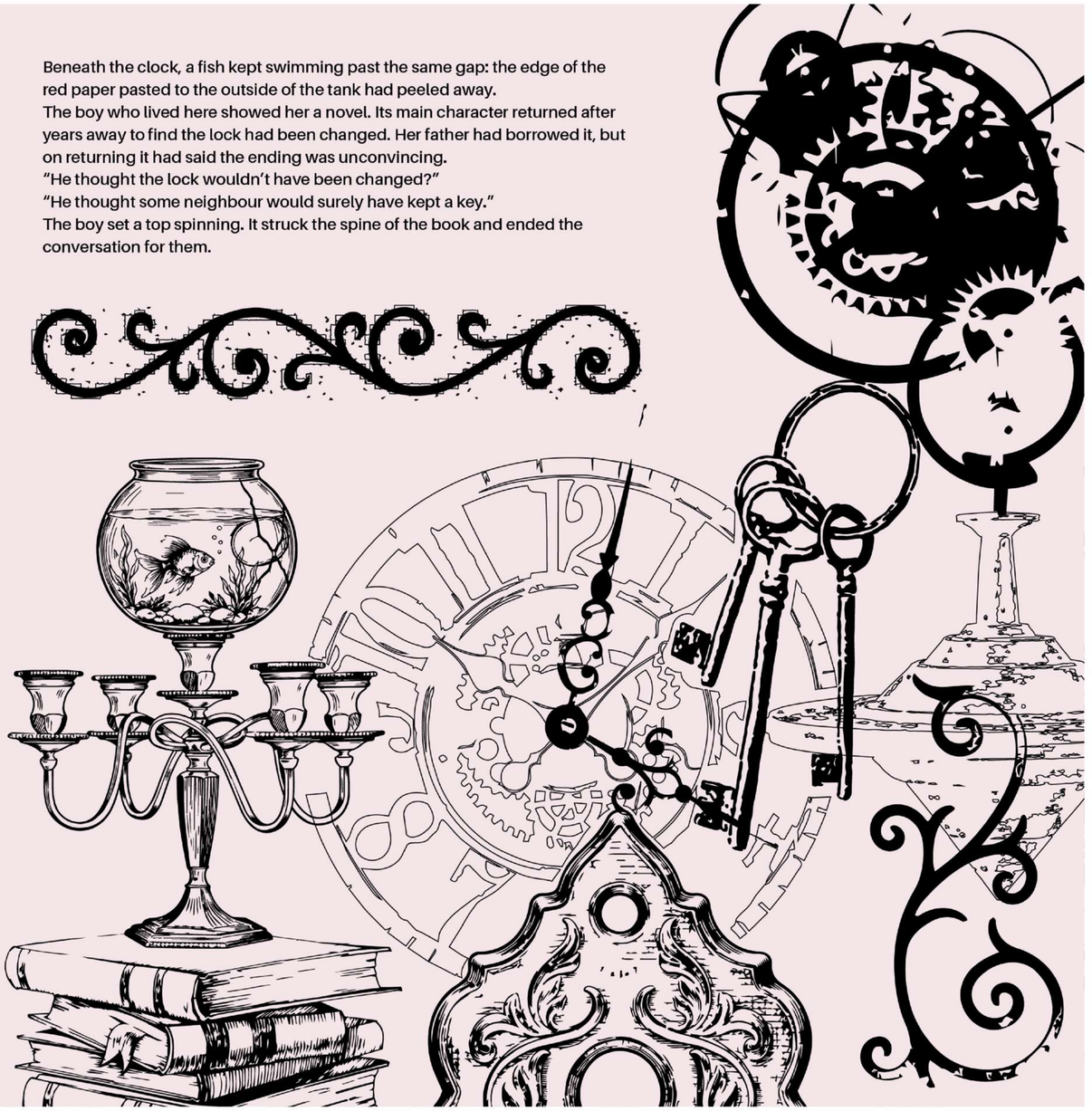
A letter lay weighted down by the window. It began with her name, followed by just two lines, both crossed out. A wooden spinning top covered the place for the signature. When she spun it as a child, her father always complained that the noise disturbed his work. Eventually he had wrapped a piece of cloth around its tip.
The cloth was still there, worn through.



Mr Luo pushed a box of letters towards her. When his wife was alive, whenever they quarrelled they would roll a die to decide who should apologise first. Later, when she was in hospital, the die stayed with its six face up. Mr Luo visited every day, and every day brought home a letter he had been unwilling to read aloud to her.
A red label on the fish tank recorded the date of the water change.
"Your father came here to paint this room," he said.
"I asked him to put in the six dots. He said they'd be too small to see."
She found the piece. Held very close, it did show six dots,
each the size of a pinprick.

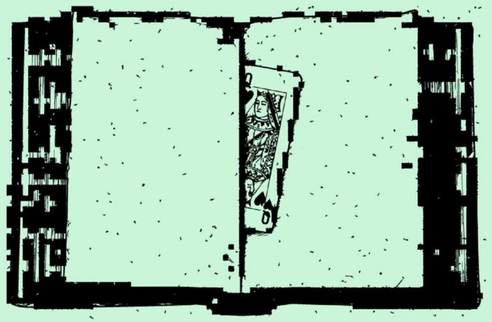


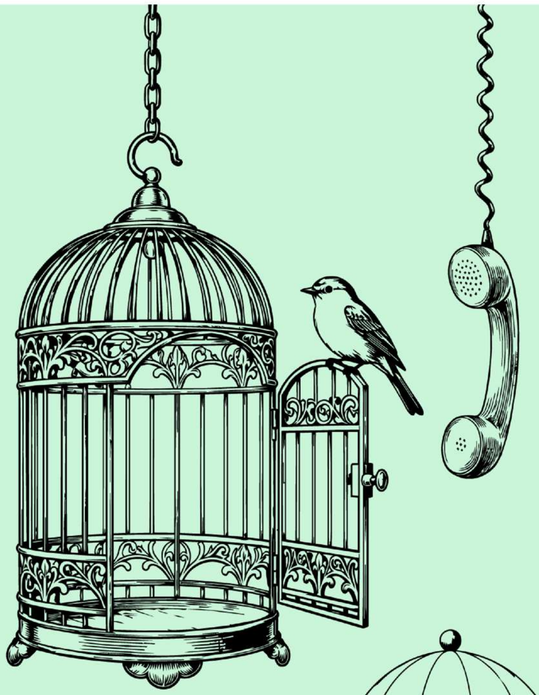
Beneath the clock, a fish kept swimming past the same gap: the edge of the red paper pasted to the outside of the tank had peeled away.
The boy who lived here showed her a novel. Its main character returned after years away to find the lock had been changed. Her father had borrowed it, but on returning it had said the ending was unconvincing.
"He thought the lock wouldn't have been changed?"
"He thought some neighbour would surely have kept a key."
The boy set a top spinning. It struck the spine of the book and ended the conversation for them.



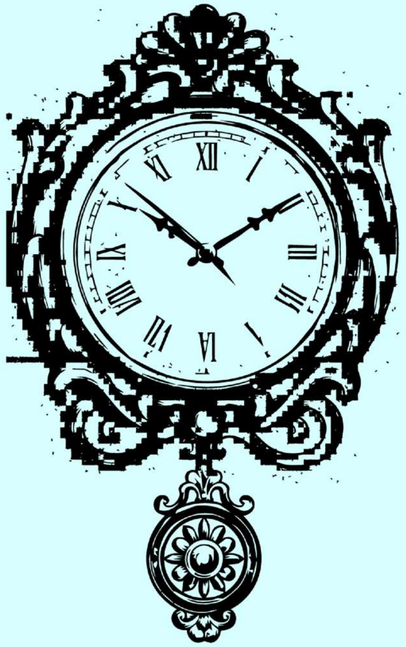
All the luggage had been bundled in white sheets. Mrs Shao slipped a playing card into her novel to mark her place, then picked up the telephone to leave a message for her daughter, who had moved away.
"If you aren't taking the birdcage, I'll bring it for you."
The cage door stood open. A bird perched on it, neither going inside nor flying away.
She waited in the doorway for Mrs Shao to hang up.

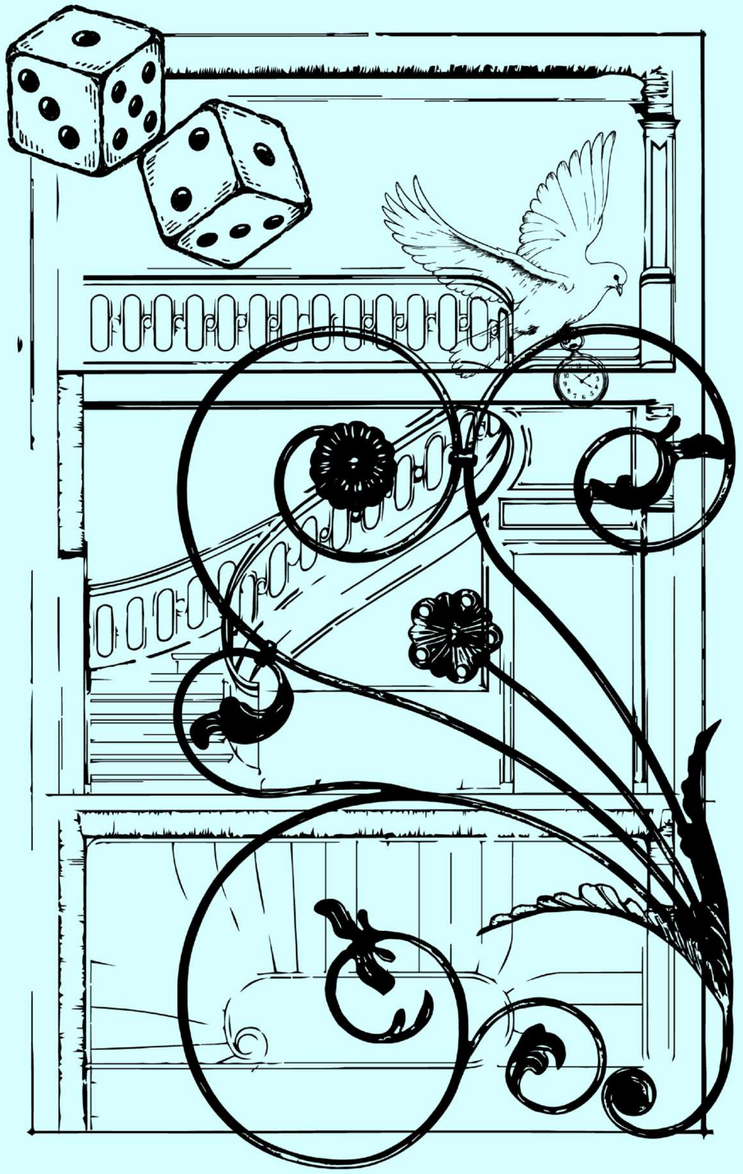
"Your father once asked me to telephone you, too," Mrs Shao said. "He said I could explain things more clearly than he could."
She could not remember receiving such a call. Mrs Shao could not remember whether she had ever made it.





The retired engineer had kept the technical report for the whole building. Sunlight had faded one side of its sky-blue cover more than the other. He used two dice to hold down the curling corners.
The report read: Third room on the top floor. Long unoccupied.
"He never used it after I left?"
"Someone was in there on the day I took the measurements."
A bird began calling outside the window. The engineer waited for it to stop before adding: "Your father was sitting on the floor. A clock was blocking part of the wall. I asked him to move it, and he said, 'Just a moment.' Later I forgot to measure it again, so I used the old figures."



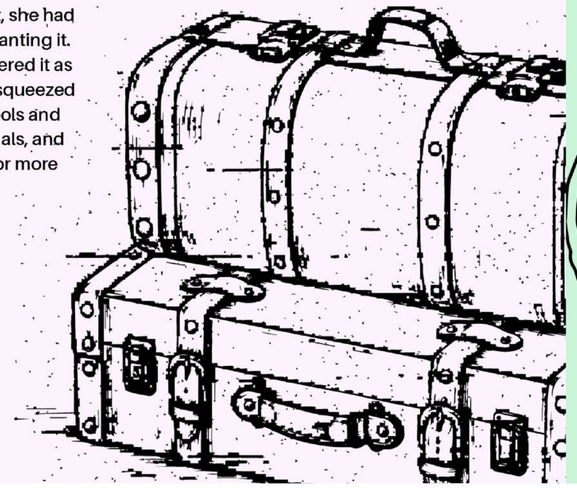


3	Extension cord	Flat 3B	returned
4	Ladder	Mr Patel	returned
5	Drill	Ms Green	returned
6	Measuring tape	Mr Lee	returned
7	Paint (white)	Flat 1A	returned
8	Sandpaper	Flat 4A	returned
9	Birdcage	Mrs Shao	returned
10	Novel	Mr Luo	returned
11	Technical report	Retired Engineer	returned
12	Gyroscope (1)	Lillian Porter	—

Remarks: Unpaid materials fee and borrowed tools have been recorded for over ten years

There was a black box in the storeroom. A spider had spun a web between the lid and the wall. Before opening it, she moved the thread aside with a fingertip.
Inside lay another technical report. Its reverse was covered with lists of borrowed things and residents' names. Most of the names had been crossed out. The entry under hers remained: "One spinning top."

As she remembered it, she had long since stopped wanting it. Yet her father had entered it as something he owed, squeezed between borrowed tools and unpaid bills for materials, and kept it on the books for more than a decade.



A spider crouched where the telephone cable turned a corner. Rings of different shades marked the white wall. The things that had hung there were already packed.

moved



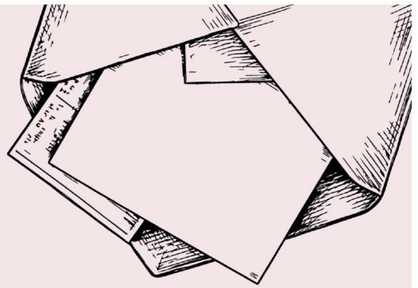
The newspaper delivery man was staying in this room for the time being. He unfolded the daily paper and read aloud: "All residents of the building have now moved out."
Someone sneezed next door.
"It said that yesterday, too," he said.
Two dice spilled from a bag he was packing. He tossed them casually. One rolled beside her shoe; the other disappeared into a corner, where it would have to wait until the furniture was moved.

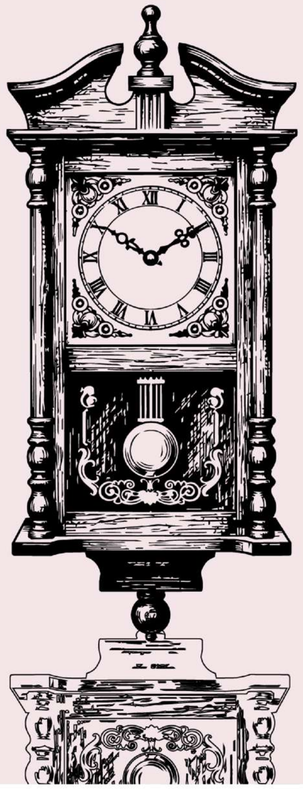
The tailor's lamp had a white cloth shade. When it was lit, the tiny shadow of a spider showed through from inside.
The tailor took one of her father's letters from the bottom of a playing-card box. She thought this, too, was addressed to her. Only when she unfolded it did she discover a request to alter a coat: shorten the left sleeve by about 1.7 centimetres, leave the right one alone.
"His shoulders became a little uneven later on," the tailor said.

She had always thought the slant in photographs of her father was caused by the angle of the camera. She folded the letter again, this time along its original creases.



A red clock hung behind the door, hidden when the door was open. Hearing them, the dog inside sniffed her hand first, then the puzzle she had brought.
The person who lived here had kept a returned letter for her. In it, her father said her birthday present had already been posted and would arrive soon.
The postmark was three years old.
"Had he finished it by then?"
"More or less."
"Why did he say he'd posted it?"
Her host bent down and moved the dog aside to make room for her to sit, without answering.







How do predetermined rules and constraints influence a designer's visual choices and creative process?

Predetermined rules encouraged me to establish new connections within a limited set of elements. They helped me move beyond habitual ways of thinking when writing, leading to unexpected plot developments that seemed absurd yet remained consistent with the logic of everyday life. They also shifted my approach to image-making: I became less focused on achieving fully resolved, polished layouts and more open to exploring relationships between elements.

What resonances and differences emerge when the same rules are applied across different creative media?

The common ground lies in the source materials: like DNA, they remain traceable within the resulting work. The difference lies in how each medium unfolds. The text itself functions like a jigsaw puzzle: as the chapters progress, the story gradually takes shape until the full picture is revealed at the end. Static illustrations, however, cannot establish temporal relationships as clearly. The illustrations across the chapters have no strong sequential continuity and tend to exist as independent images.

