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Since Spring 2013, I researched, initiated and implemented major changes to our undergraduate curriculum and initiated two new elective courses. My curricular research led to our new undergraduate studio track, *Design Studio*. The first semester of this course is in progress, with some results to share.

I proposed and ran two new open electives, both intended to nurture a interdisciplinary and research culture. *Call for Proposals* asked students to generate proposals as finished forms. The class attracted students from architecture, ID, Brown, GD undergrads and grads. This gave the students an opportunity to think ‘big’, and play out ideas that normally would be back-burnered due to a lack of skills or resources. Weekly guests shared how their ambitious projects made their way to reality.

HTML Output was an upper-level Web class that asked students to use the

Web browser as a general purpose design tool. The second half of the semester was one collaborative project.

I am not showing work from Visual Systems and Relational Design, the junior year courses that I taught in spring of 2013. Those courses are team-taught, with a curriculum that was identical to my previous review. The student results are in keeping with the previous courses. I am listing URLs for all course websites below. Although also in my last dossier, the workshop *Digital Bits*, also ran last year, but I adjusted the curriculum with improved results.

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VS13.JOHNCASERTA.INFO

CFP13.JOHNCASERTA.INFO

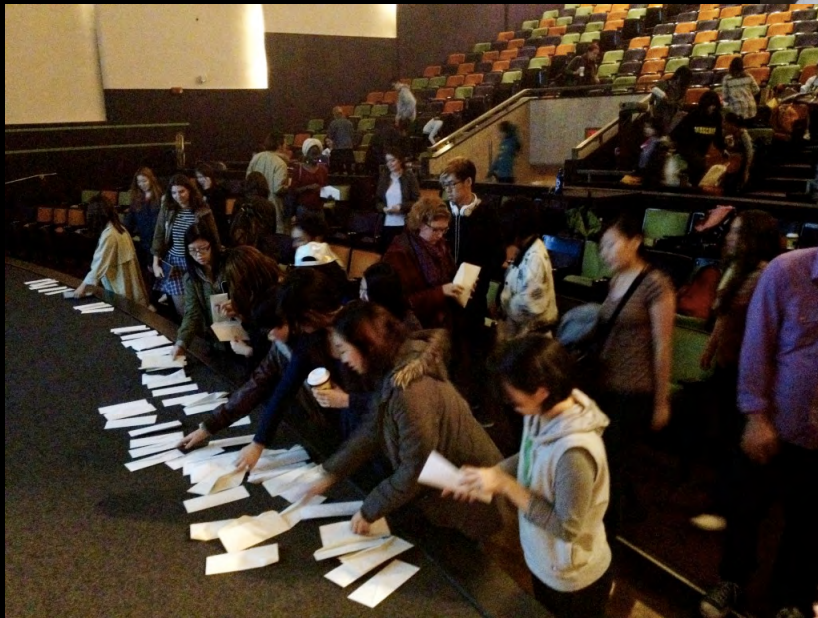
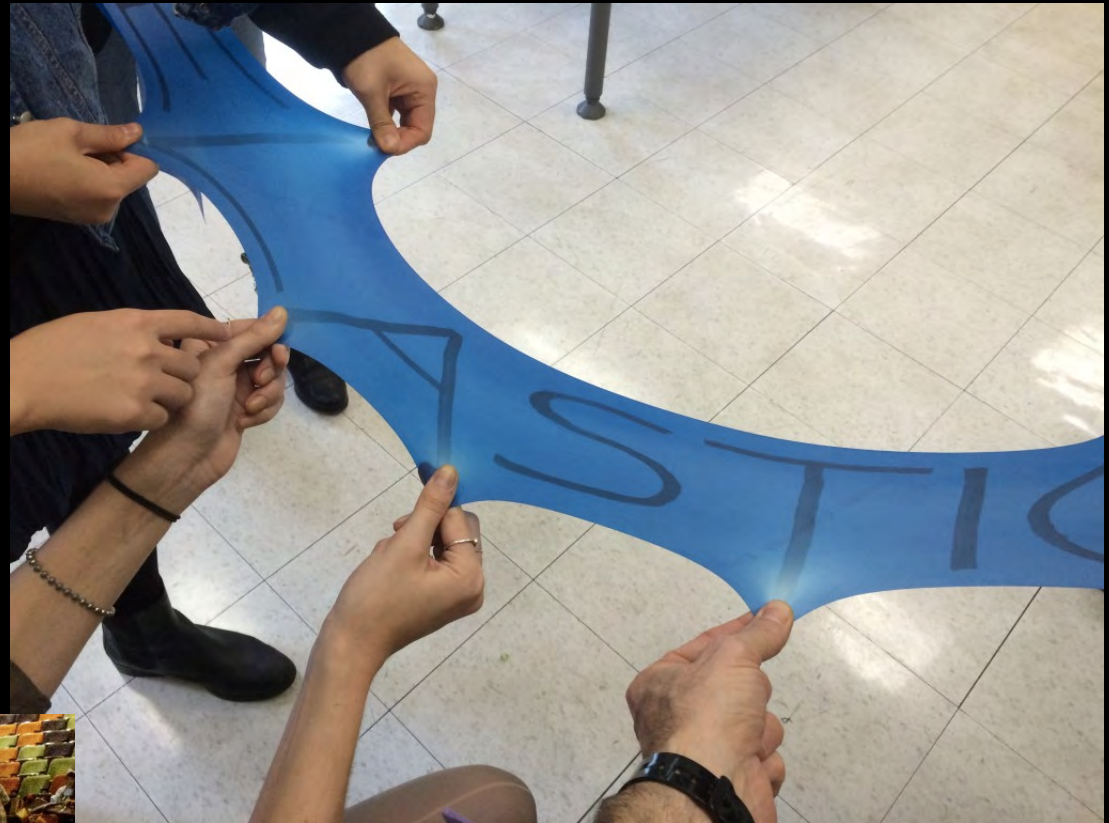
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HTMLOUTPUT.CHARRETTE.WS

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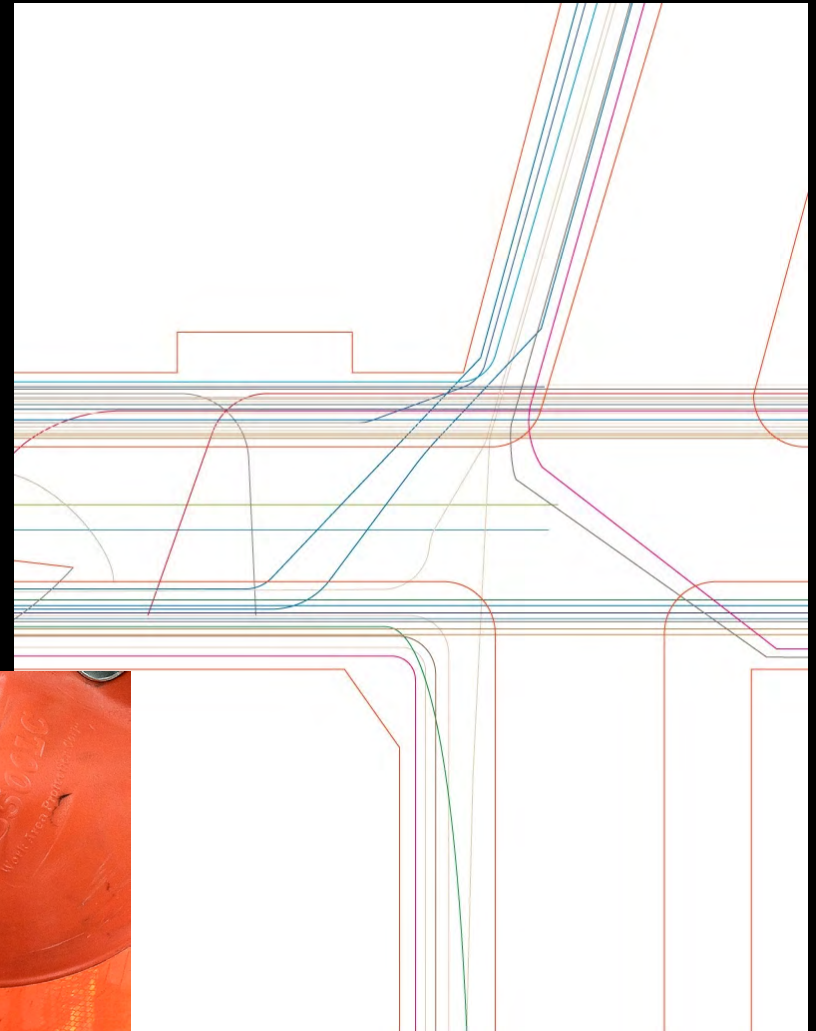
Design Studio is unit-based, with each instructor offering a unit of study to all 60 students. The unit is constructed around one faculty member's research question. Perhaps more important than end products is getting students up to experiment with different ways of working, researching and making.



Ben Shaykin's unit on tools in design began with students choosing a mystery tool in an envelope.

My one-week unit started off the semester: *How can we make use of everyday observations in our work?* Designers are often asked to contribute in areas where they are novices — needing to regularly learn new content and contexts in order to design. One component skill is the ability to see, to make sense of what one sees, and then communicate that clearly back to others. Put more broadly, how do you make sense of an existing condition? How do you distill or find meaning in what is already there? And how can you make use of it? Placed within the context of a design process, this is defined as observational research, assessing what ‘is’ before anything needs to be ‘done’. What designers do with their

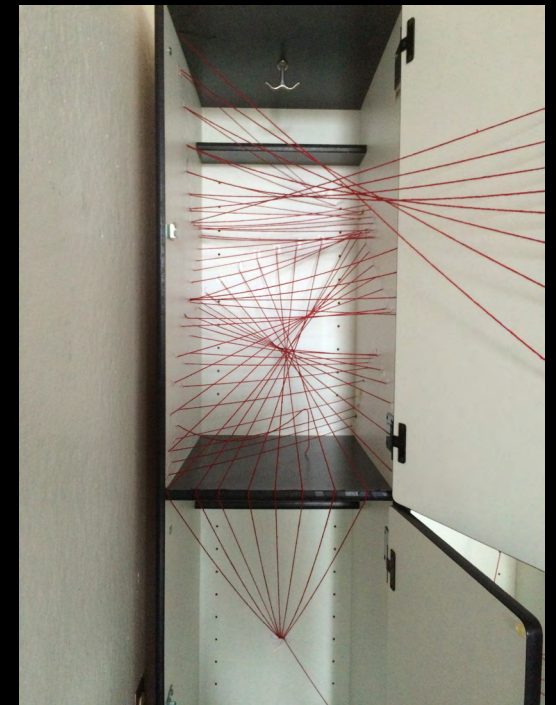
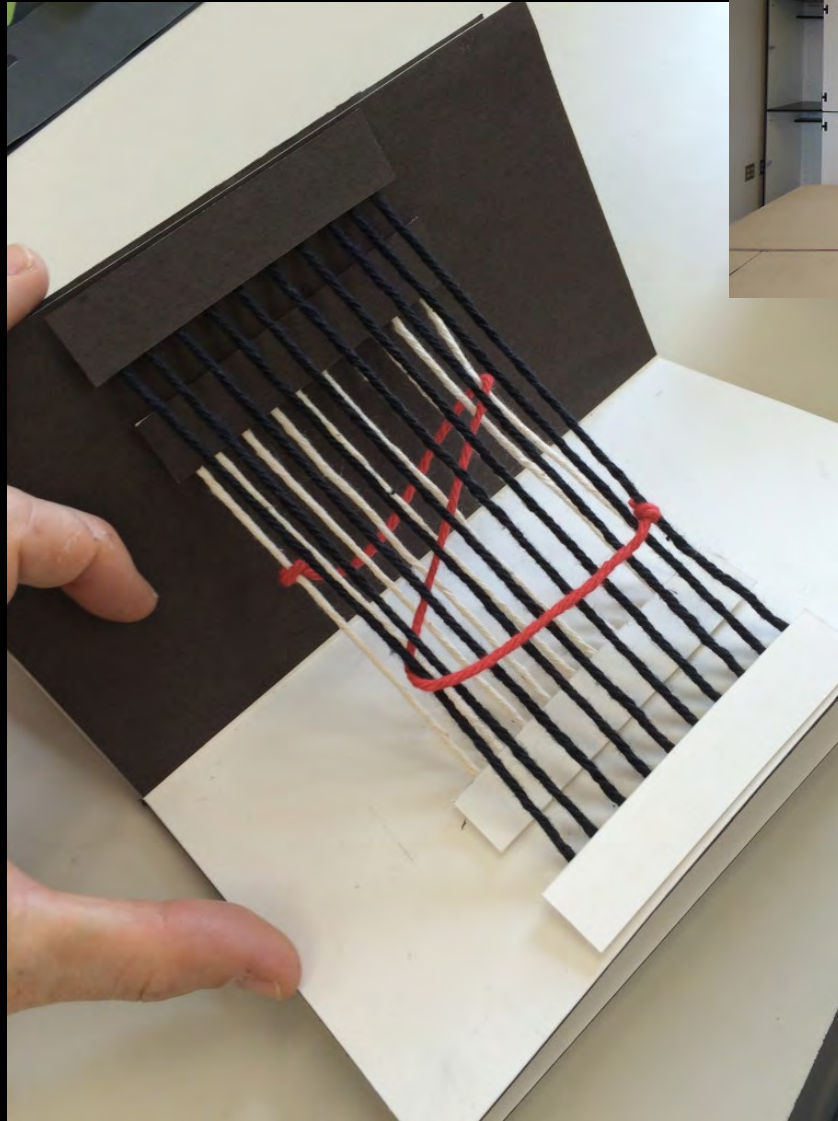
research is another question altogether. This one-week unit asks students to experiment with various forms of documenting observations and trying various forms that communicate them to a new audience.



Observations ranged from diagrams to details of objects. We discussed issues of perspective, point of view and how to ‘record’ the essence of an observation

Unit 4: How does space influence design concepts? How do designs alter space?

This student chose a wall of lockers on the 7th floor of Design Center. I asked students to make a tabletop object that allows them to work through eventual installation ideas in a studio environment. The tabletop object be generative, helping to explore themes that the student is interested in. Jamie's book form explores the opening and closing gesture of lockers and what experiences can be had with using string. Her final project makes use of the gesture in her model, but also fills all the open lockers with a connective 'network' of string.



One student turned all of the physical interfaces of a soda machine into an arcade game.

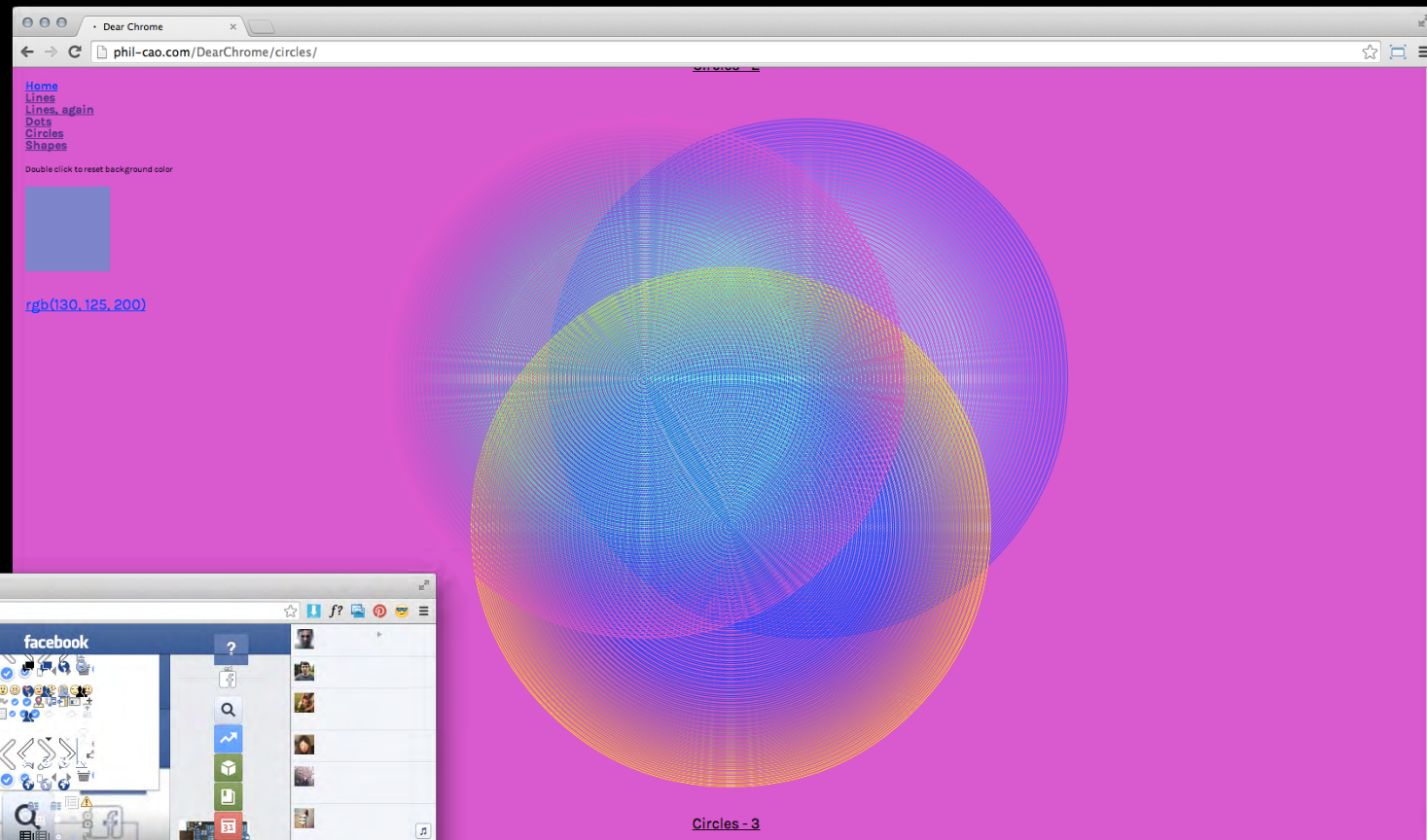


Typography runs in two directions, with letter-forms being exaggerated in width so they are read from certain angles.

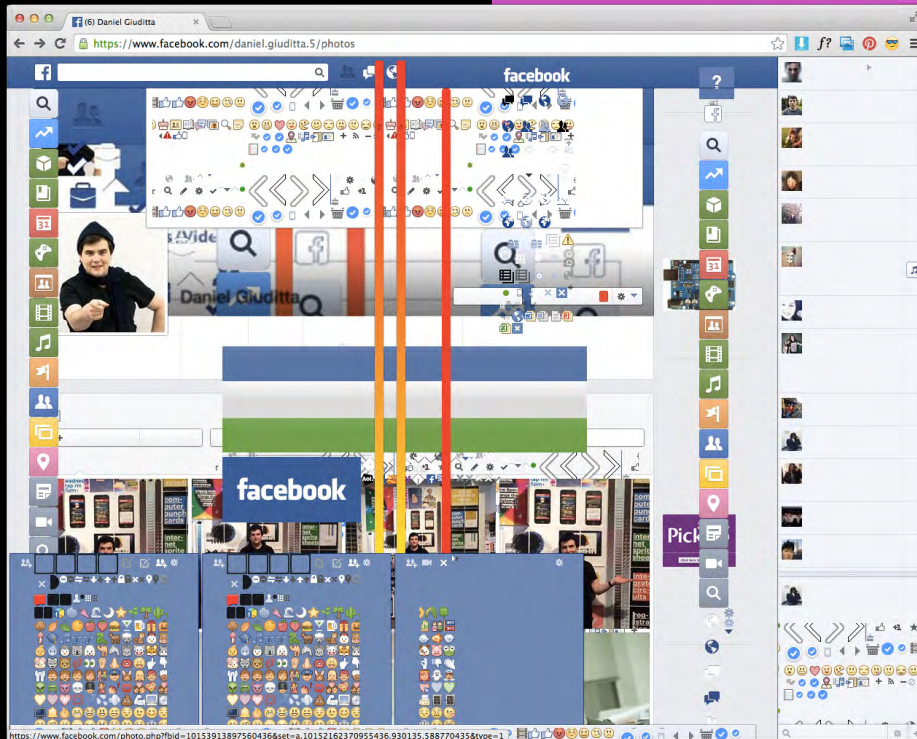


Student work from *HTML Output* fell into these categories: interviews, formal explorations using the browser, code libraries resulting from these explorations, and the group project publishing the above in a printable website.

[SEE WEBSITE](#)



*Visual explorations
using the browser*



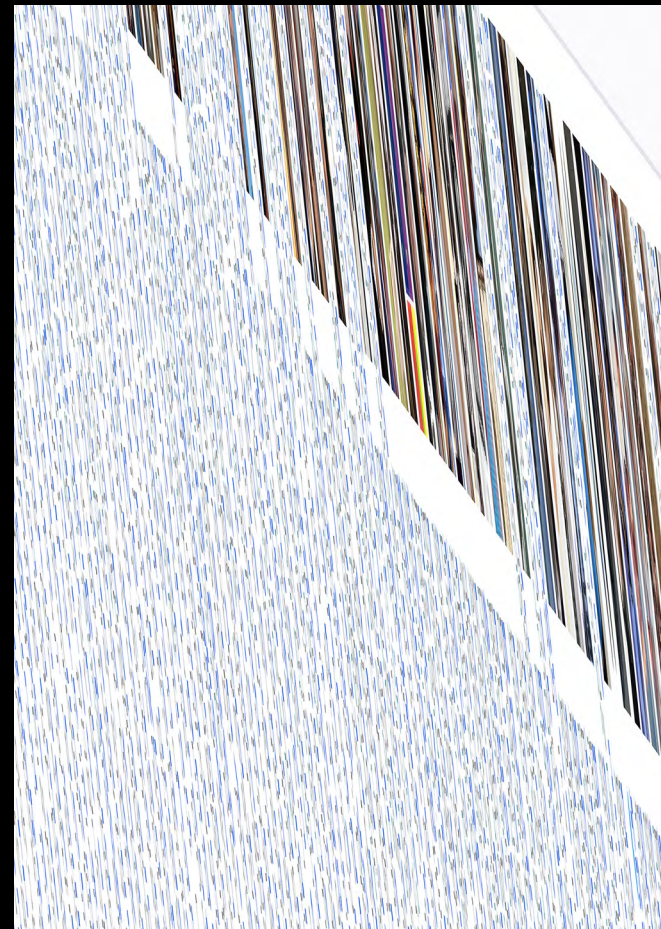
Sadly, rather than returning the printed student evaluations to the library, the designated student packed them away with his studio materials and took them back to his parent's house. I have made attempts to get them sent back to Academic Affairs.

However, I have had discussions with some of the students from *HTML Output* and reflected on the course a great deal. After an introductory assignment, I asked students to break into research areas and develop projects using the browser as a tool for some area of design to be consumed out of the browser: visualization, poster series, typography. I was surprised to see only surface experimentation with these areas. I had faith that the seniors and graduate students could dive deep and generate a coherent body of work. Most of them needed a lot more structure.

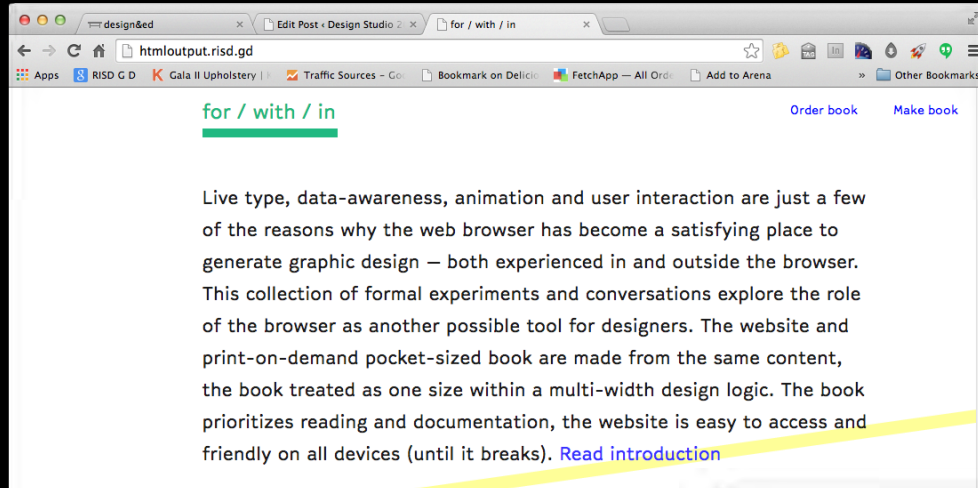
I remain excited and optimistic in the role of the 'research' elective at RISD, but I do think a class of this sort needs more models and structure. One example would be to ask students to restate research interests in their own language. And that experiments lead to a hypothesis or greater argument.

The example at right was a common pitfall. There was a significant amount of experimenting with existing websites, but much less original content generation or the ability to build up on the experimentation. This was due also to the technical nature of the class.

The second half of the semester was more structured and we accomplished a lot. But I do think individual projects lacked depth and focus.



The second half of the semester was dedicated to making a web to book project. There are examples of my designs in my professional work section. Here I am showing a bit of the work of the students. Most significantly was the coding and systems work that enabled peer collaboration and the web to print system to work.

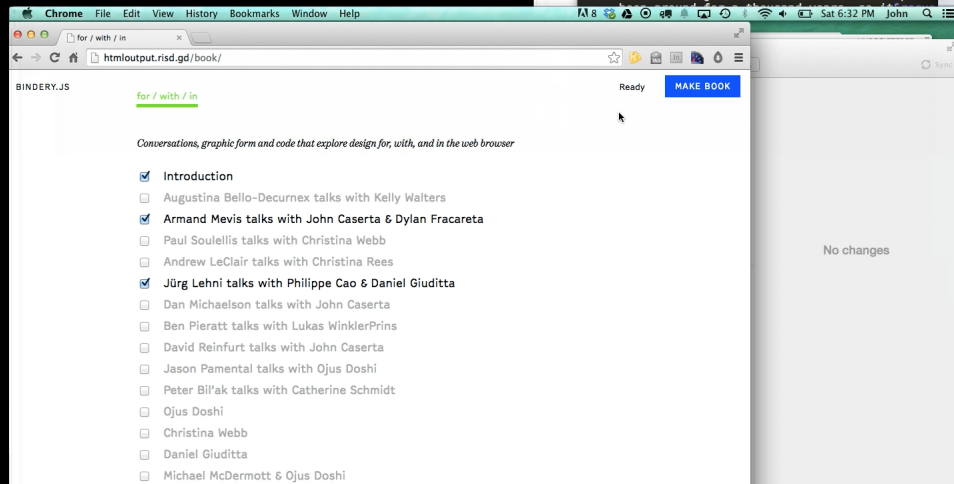
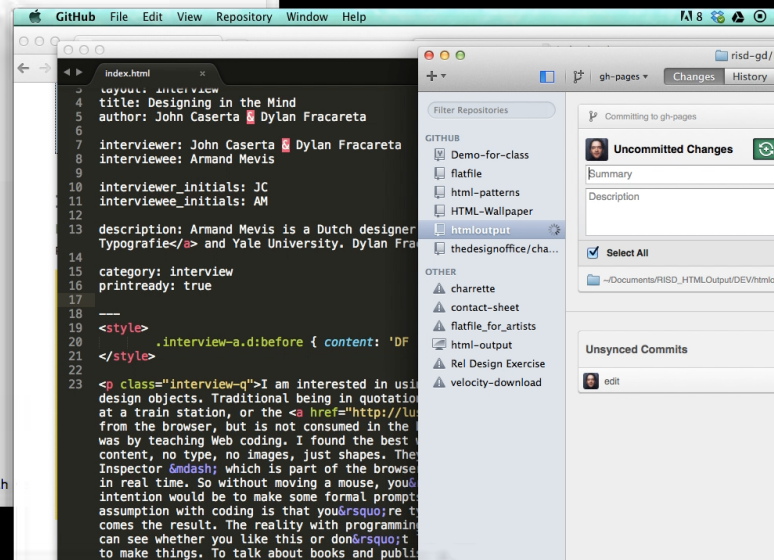


Interviews and projects by: Evan Brooks, Lukas WinklerPrins, Philippe Cao, Catherine Schmidt, Christina Rees, Christina Webb, Kelly Walters, Michael McDermott, Ojus Doshi, Daniel Giuditta, John Caserta

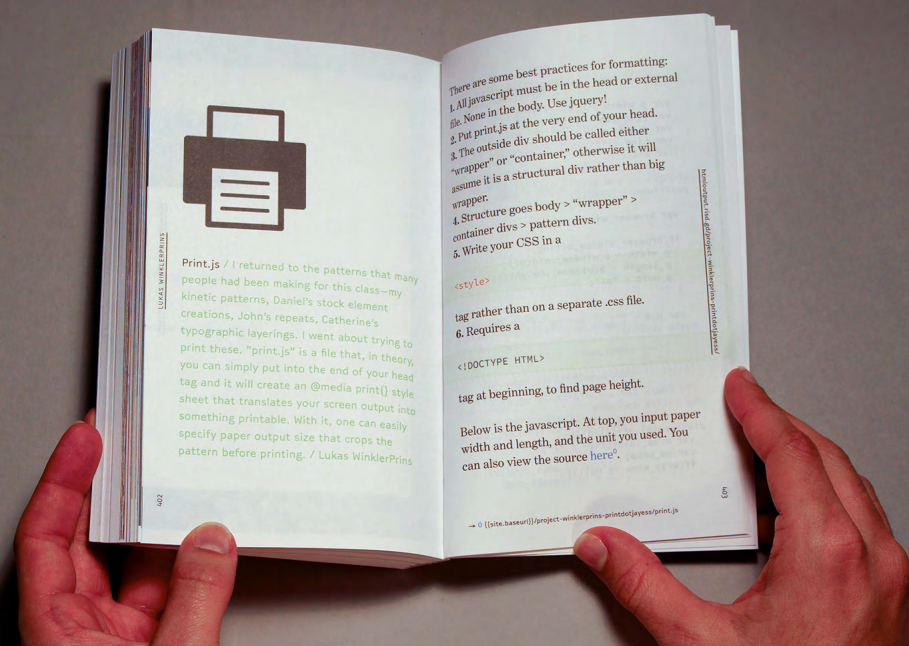
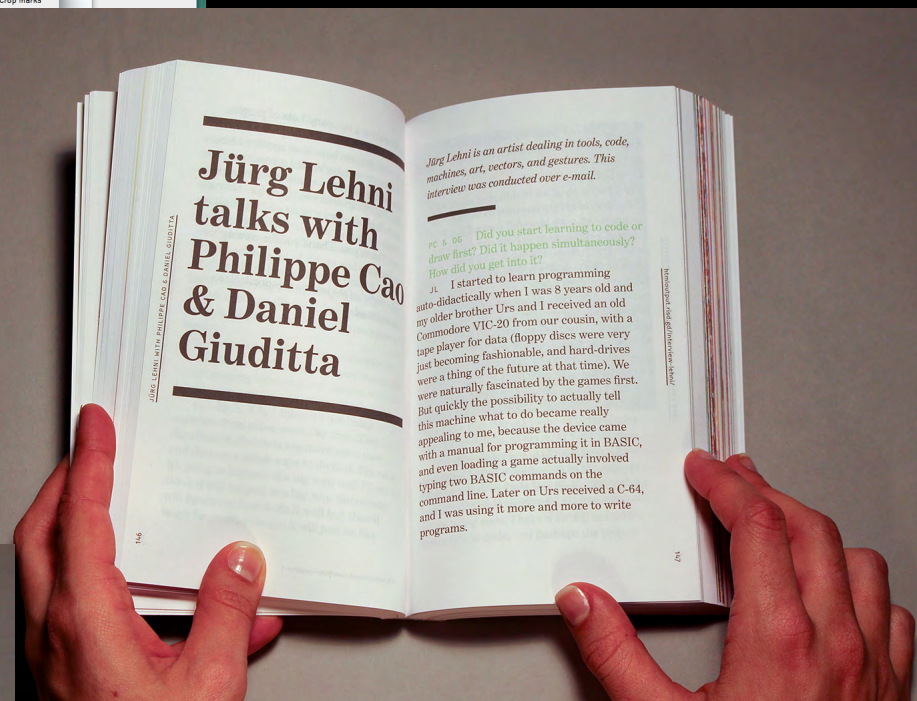
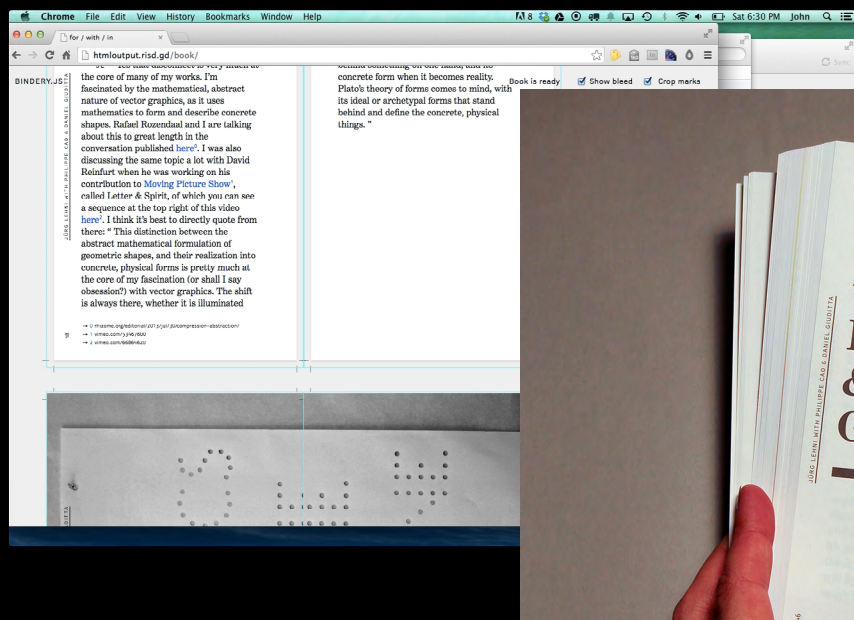
Conversations

Dan Michaelson talks with John Caserta

Augustina Bello-Decurnex talks with



Students split into teams to take on the design and production of the final website/book. The content of the final project were the interviews and individual projects from the first half of the semester.



Call for Proposals was an interdisciplinary elective that treated the proposal as end form. This allowed students to reach beyond what they could make themselves and to create actual pitches to solicit collaborators, access and funding. [CLASS WEBSITE](#)



RADIO RISD



LOG ON & PRESS PLAY

All Radio RISD content will be hosted by Wavestreaming, a site that allows broadcasters to upload audio to a third-party server, and then embed the stream within their own website. All listeners have to do is log on and press play, unlike many other internet radio stations which often require another program, like iTunes, to stream from.

The website will aggregate the various segments, in addition to sharable Spotify playlists, featured music videos, related articles, and anything else that helps elevate the Radio RISD content and experience.

CSI gets proposals every year from students to start a Radio Station. This is the first one they took seriously and funded.

Proposals ranged from Kennedy Plaza art installations to books proposals and products for Kickstarter to funding for magazines.



Helvetica Ornament : A Kiley



etc.

A Platform for Design Process

Justin Chen

Name
Justin Chen

Department
Graphic Design

Graduation Year
2013

Track
Final year student in 3-year program

Category
Individual

Résumé
Attached in the back

Project Name
etc.

1/6



I ran an open lunchtime lecture series to discuss how different practitioners tell their story of how they pitched their own projects. Many were via Skype, which worked really well.

Christopher Specce is a designer whose approach examines how production, materials, and ability influence the material works in our culture. He has designed for New York and Providence, Rhode Island. His work includes projects for Herman Miller and Precious & Gamble. His work has been featured in publications like the New York Times, Wallpaper, and Hyperall about his work exhibited at MoMA, the RISD Museum, and Rivington Arms.

Outside guests join us weekly for lunch (in person and via skype) to talk about the nitty gritty of how self-initiated projects get off the ground.

Part of the elective, "Call for Proposals"

Schedule and resources: cfp1.3.johncaserta.info

Lunch with

Chris Specce

Tues April 23rd
12→1p
DC Rm 404

Bring your food and a question or two

Chris will talk about how to become a producer for his studio, David Mitchell, which has become a "Microbusiness."

Small: David Mitchell of Chicago, Department of Graphic Design

Murray McMillan is a video, photography and installation artist who has worked in collaboration with his wife Margaret since 2000. Based in Providence, their artistically mixed and crafted works have exhibited internationally and received numerous awards and accolades.

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Schedule and resources: cfp1.3.johncaserta.info

Lunch with

Murray McMillan

Tues April 2nd
12→1p
DC Rm 404

Bring your food and a question or two

Murray will discuss the process for developing large-scale landscape work, getting together with photographers and graphic designers, and making connections.

Small: David Mitchell of Chicago, Department of Graphic Design

Max Ackerman graduated from RISD with a B.S. in 2001. He has been based in New York since graduation working on a mix of self-initiated, collaborative and commissioned design projects.

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Part of the elective, "Call for Proposals"

Schedule and resources: cfp1.3.johncaserta.info

Lunch with

Max Ackerman

Tues Feb 26th
12→1p
DC Rm 404

Bring your food and a question or two

Max will present this project about a new addition to the graphic design department.

Small: David Mitchell of Chicago, Department of Graphic Design

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Part of the elective, "Call for Proposals"

Schedule and resources: cfp1.3.johncaserta.info

Lunch with

Boxenbaum

April 16th
12→1p
DC Rm 404

Bring your food and a question or two

Small: David Mitchell of Chicago, Department of Graphic Design

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Part of the elective, "Call for Proposals"

Schedule and resources: cfp1.3.johncaserta.info

Coffee with

Danielle Aubert

Tues March 12th
10→11a
DC Rm 404

Bring your coffee and a question or two

Small: David Mitchell of Chicago, Department of Graphic Design

Michael Carabetta is creative director of Chronicle Books, a San Francisco based publisher. His work has received recognition in the AIGA, NY Book/Art Center shows, and in Graphic Books I and II. His projects have appeared in a variety of design publications including Communication Arts, Creative, and C.O. magazine and have received awards from the San Francisco Art Club, New York Art Directors Club, and the Western Art Directors Club.

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Schedule and resources: cfp1.3.johncaserta.info

Lunch with

Michael Carabetta

Tues March 19th
12→1p
DC Rm 404

Bring your food and a question or two

Michael will talk about how to get your book from idea to publication.

Small: David Mitchell of Chicago, Department of Graphic Design

Megan Feehan began her design career as an architect for Architects Anna Norval in Paris and at SOCO in New York. She left architecture for graphic design in 2000, completing an MFA in graphic design from the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) where she now teaches in the graphic design department.

Outside guests join us weekly for lunch (in person and via skype) to talk about the nitty gritty of how self-initiated projects get off the ground.

Part of the elective, "Call for Proposals"

Schedule and resources: cfp1.3.johncaserta.info

Lunch with

Megan Feehan

Tues April 9th
12→1p
DC Rm 404

Bring your food and a question or two

Small: David Mitchell of Chicago, Department of Graphic Design

Glen Cummings is the principal of MFWP, a graphic design studio based in New York City. Previously, Glen worked as an art director at 2-4 in New York City. Glen's work has been exhibited or presented by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, The New Museum, The Venice Architecture Biennale, and many more.

Outside guests join us weekly for lunch (in person and via skype) to talk about the nitty gritty of how self-initiated projects get off the ground.

Part of the elective, "Call for Proposals"

Schedule and resources: cfp1.3.johncaserta.info

Lunch with

Glen Cummings

Tues March 5th
12→1p
DC Rm 404

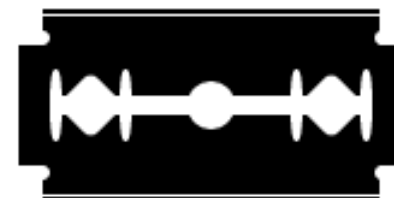
Bring your food and a question or two

Glen will talk about what it's like to be a self-initiated artist and about working in New York City.

Small: David Mitchell of Chicago, Department of Graphic Design

Digital Bits was a three-week rotating workshop for sophomores. It is being transitioned into a four-week 1-credit elective starting this spring. The workshop uses drawing as a means to teach web programming languages.

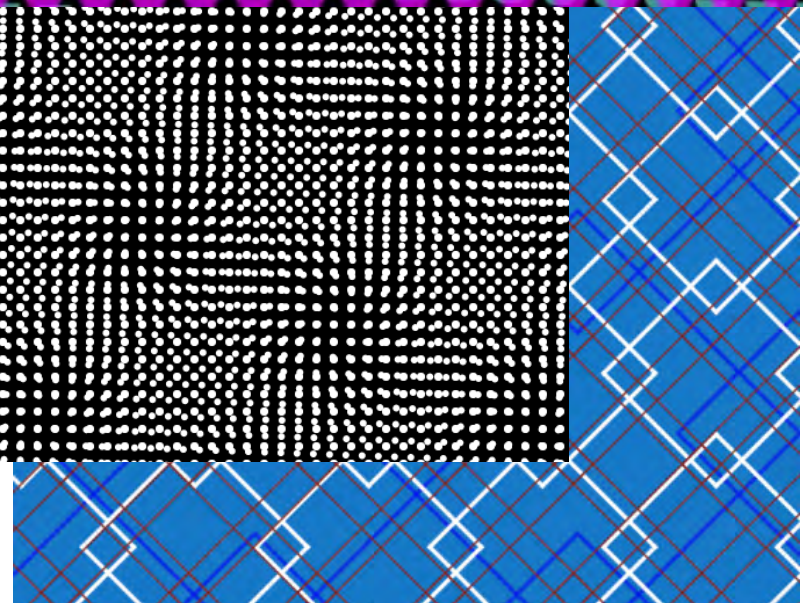
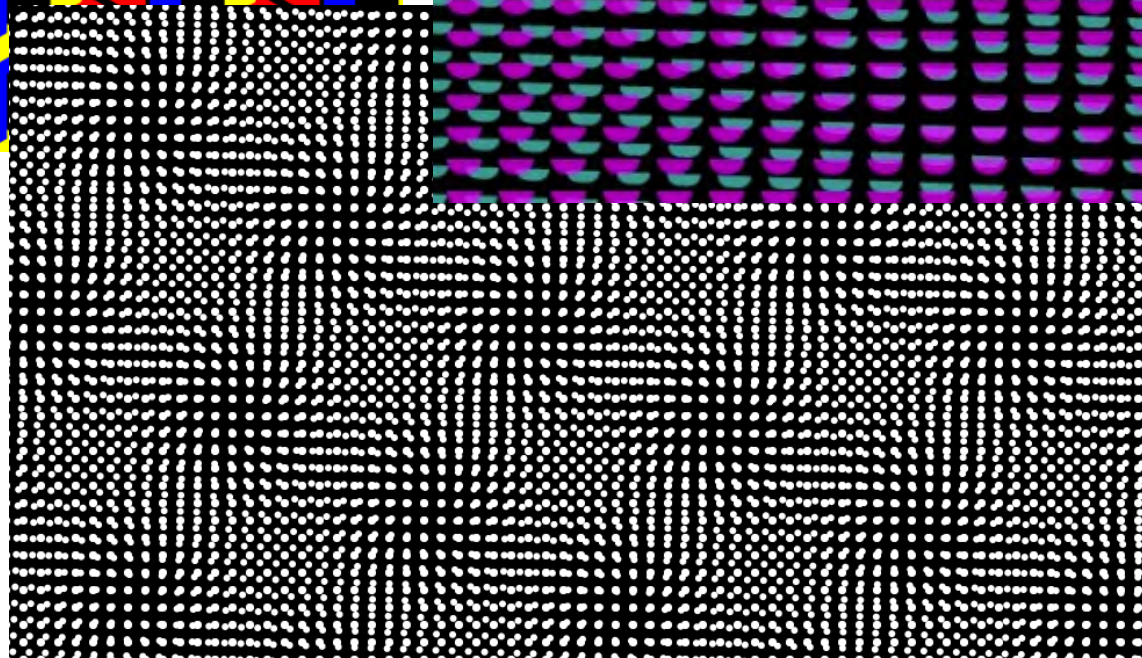
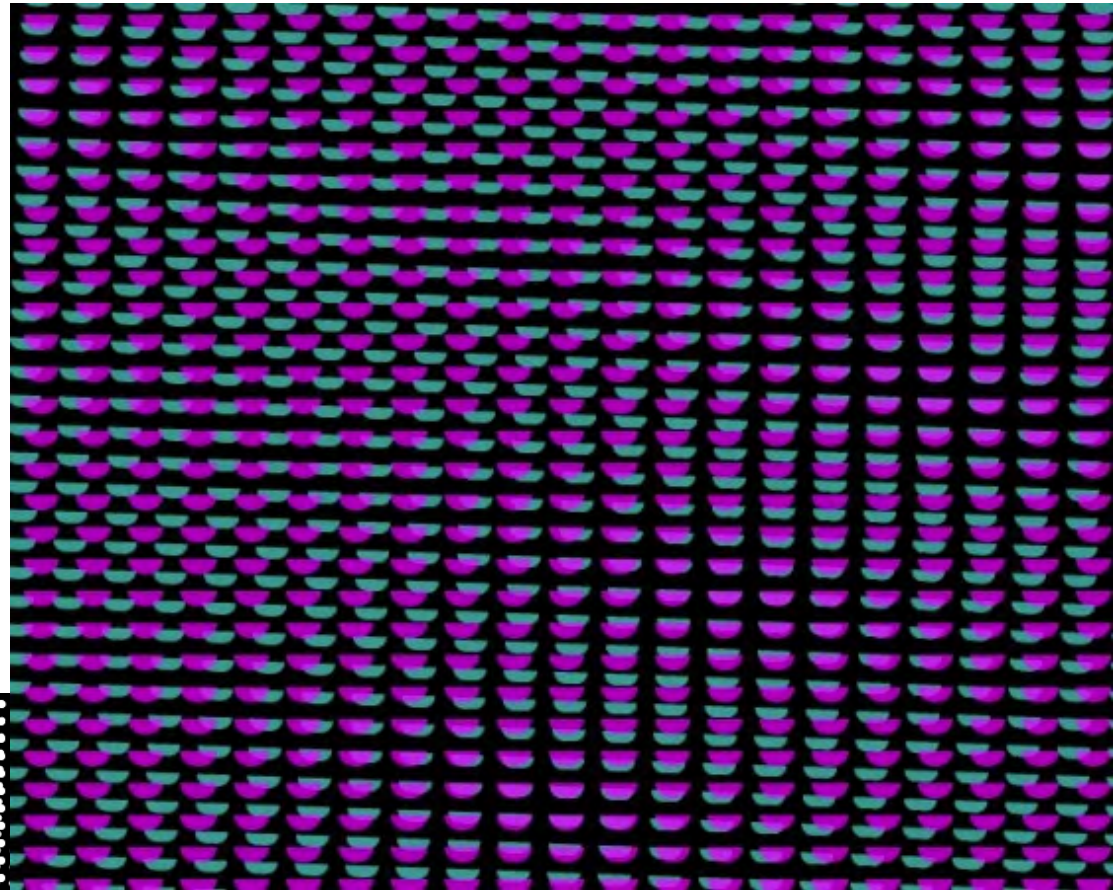
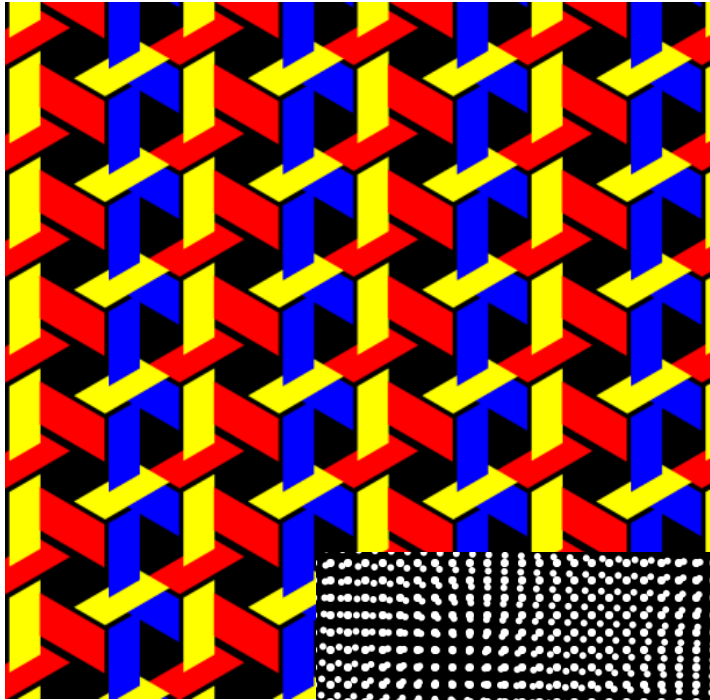
[CLASS WEBSITE](#)



Part One: Concrete Forms

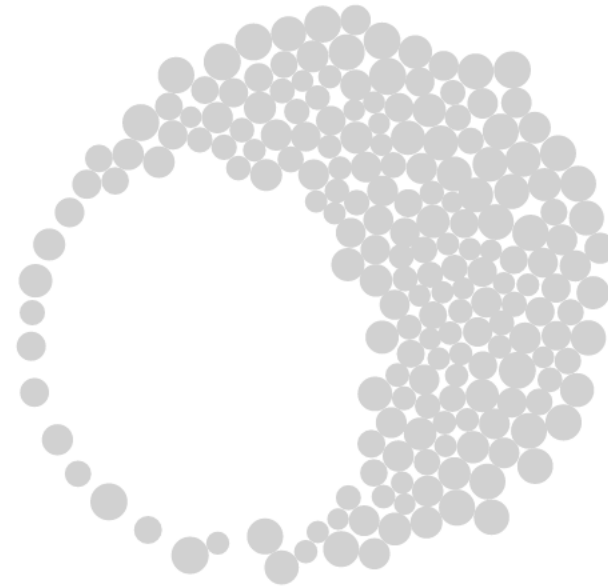
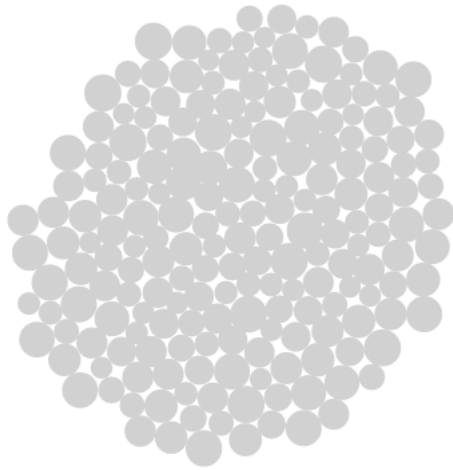
Designing websites starts with structural thinking — blocking in shapes in the browser. It's the same thinking needed to break objects into shapes. This process demands that you both plan your shapes in advance (by sketching) and adapt them to the reality of what you are able to code and what you see while you are coding.



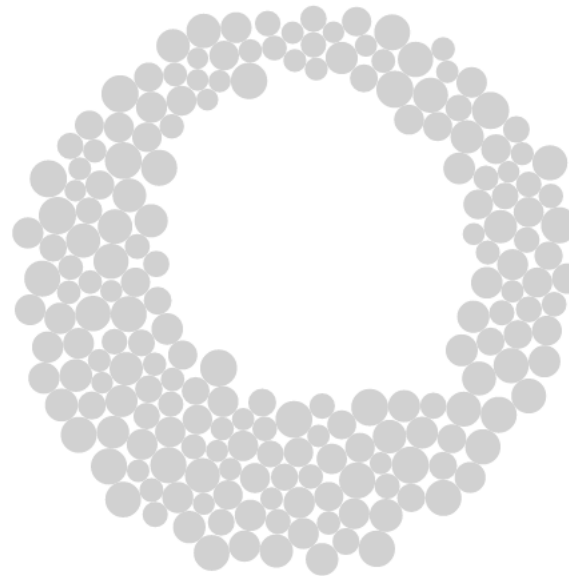
Part Two: Abstract Forms

The web is not about control. This take-home assignment asks students to take specific elements and repeat them to form a continuous pattern. The pattern may be created from the combination of floating elements and positioned elements.

Part Three: Active Forms



“Make a work that shifts and alters its experience based on the size of the browser.” You may also introduce interactivity and interactions within the browser itself. However, the focus of the assignment is the “transition” between states. How can you activate/animate/create unexpected changes in those states.



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End

