

Matthew Chrislip

Course Leader

MA Graphic Communication Design

Central Saint Martins, UAL

m.chrislip@csm.arts.ac.uk

PhD candidate

School of Design

RMIT University

matthew@dowland.us

Experiments in publishing in

The Graphic in Translation

The Graphic in Translation

Translation is often casually invoked as both a method and an outcome of graphic design practices.

Like linguistic translation, graphic design is concerned with meaning, its forms, and its transferability, and both practices are tasked with reconfiguring and transmitting content across contexts—and, generally, with maintaining some degree of semantic continuity through this change. But as in a geometric ‘translation’, in graphic design this change can be as much material and technical as it is semantic.

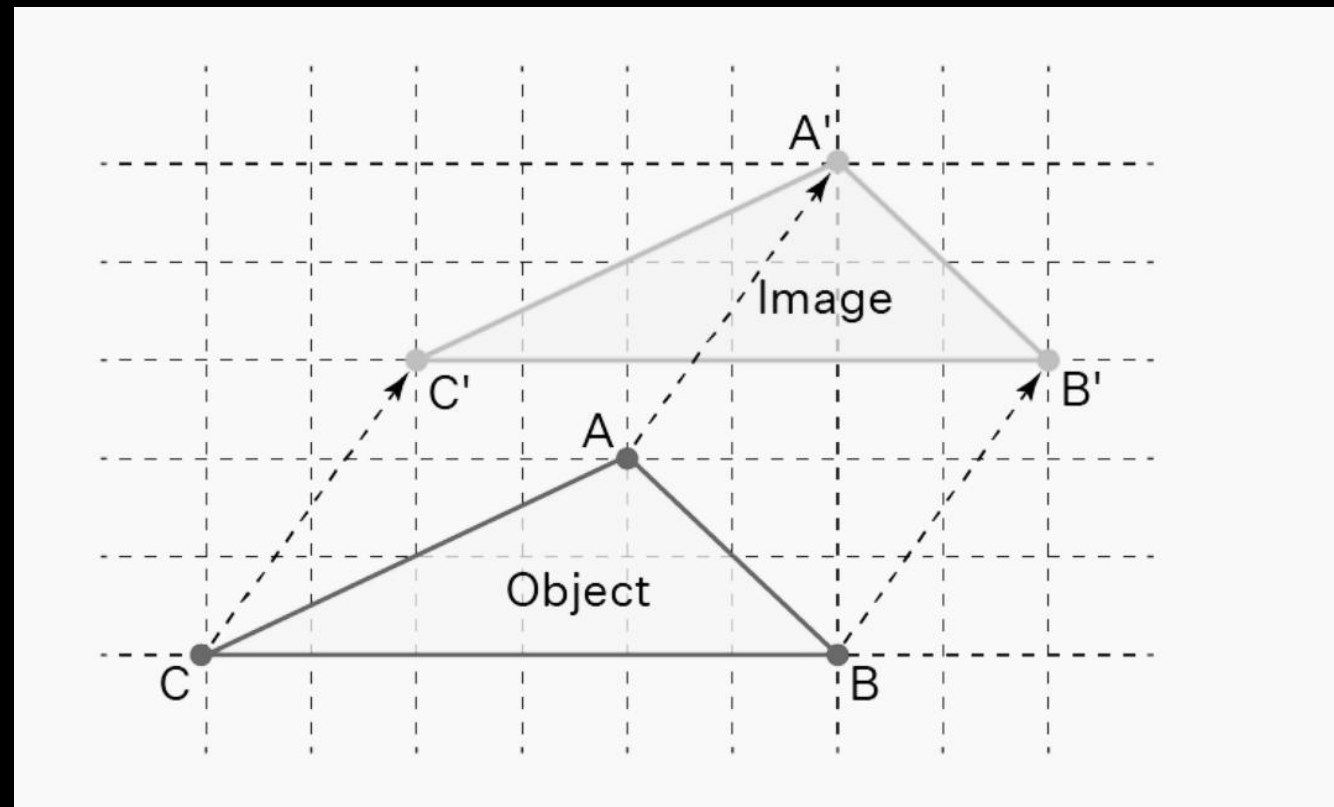
In this research I explore graphic design and linguistic translation as proximate and symmetrical practices in order to test the productive potential of this association, as well as to find the limits of its usefulness. This exploration is itself a kind of translation, entailing

the comparison of existing forms, production methods, and theoretical frameworks found across the two domains, and supporting the development of new possible forms, methods, and theories.

This research is based primarily in studio practice, where methods of formal production can be deployed as research methods, foregrounding the role of the graphic in the construction of knowledge. The comparison between graphic design and translation is tested through reflexive experimentation with graphic media—especially those concerned with textual material, like typography, book design, and writing practice. These experimental methods are often drawn from specific translation practices: from simultaneous interpretation, an improvisational and open-ended approach to production, and from linguistic translation, an interest in syntax that finds its visual corollary in gestalt principles.

This comparison across domains of practice, like all translations, induces a potentially infinite multiplication of semantic and material possibility. But this work finds useful limits through the design of structural frameworks—often books, like the one containing the dissertation of this research—that gather its many trajectories and translate its theoretical propositions into concrete (though provisional) forms.

Graphic design and geometric translation





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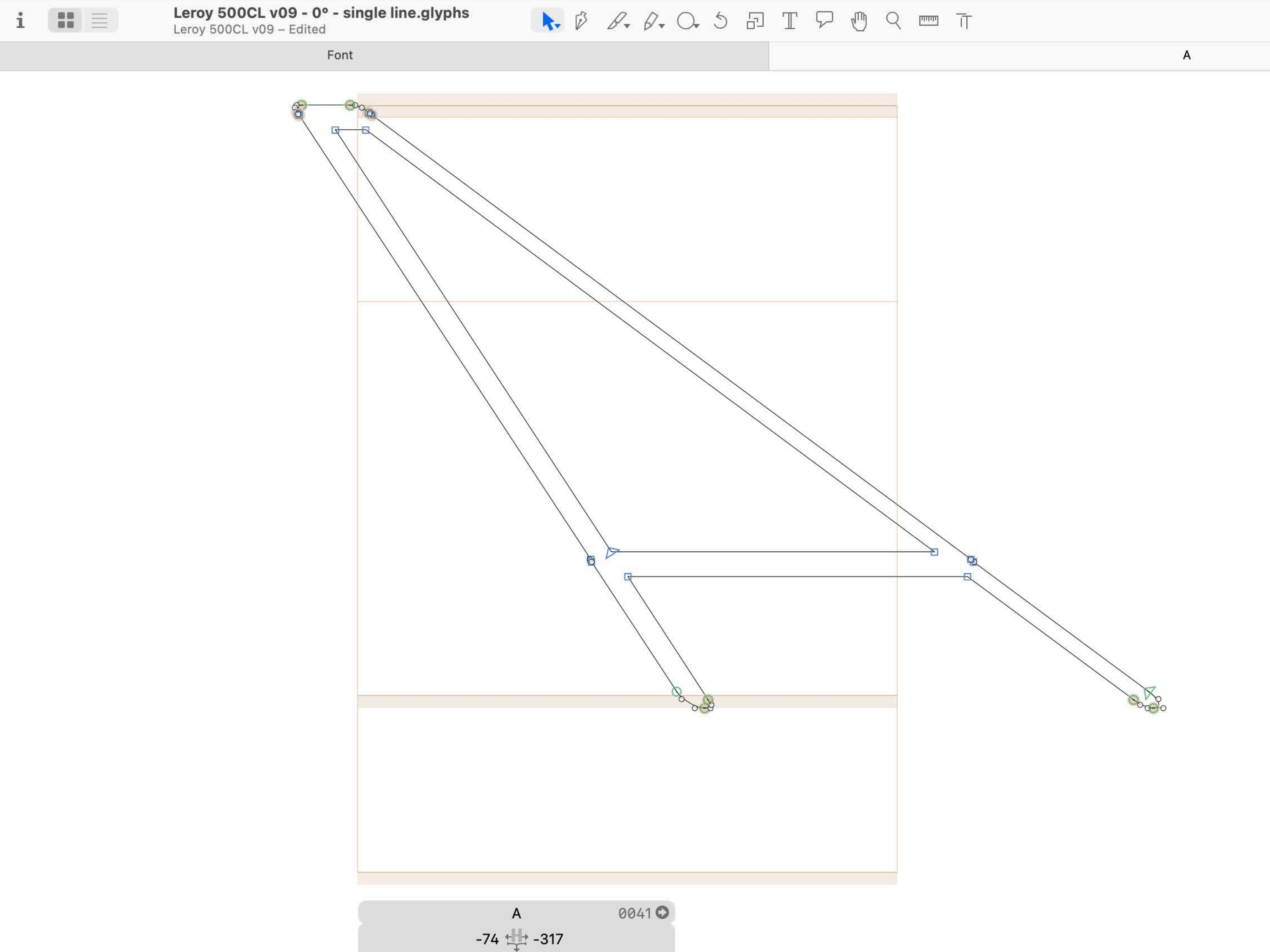
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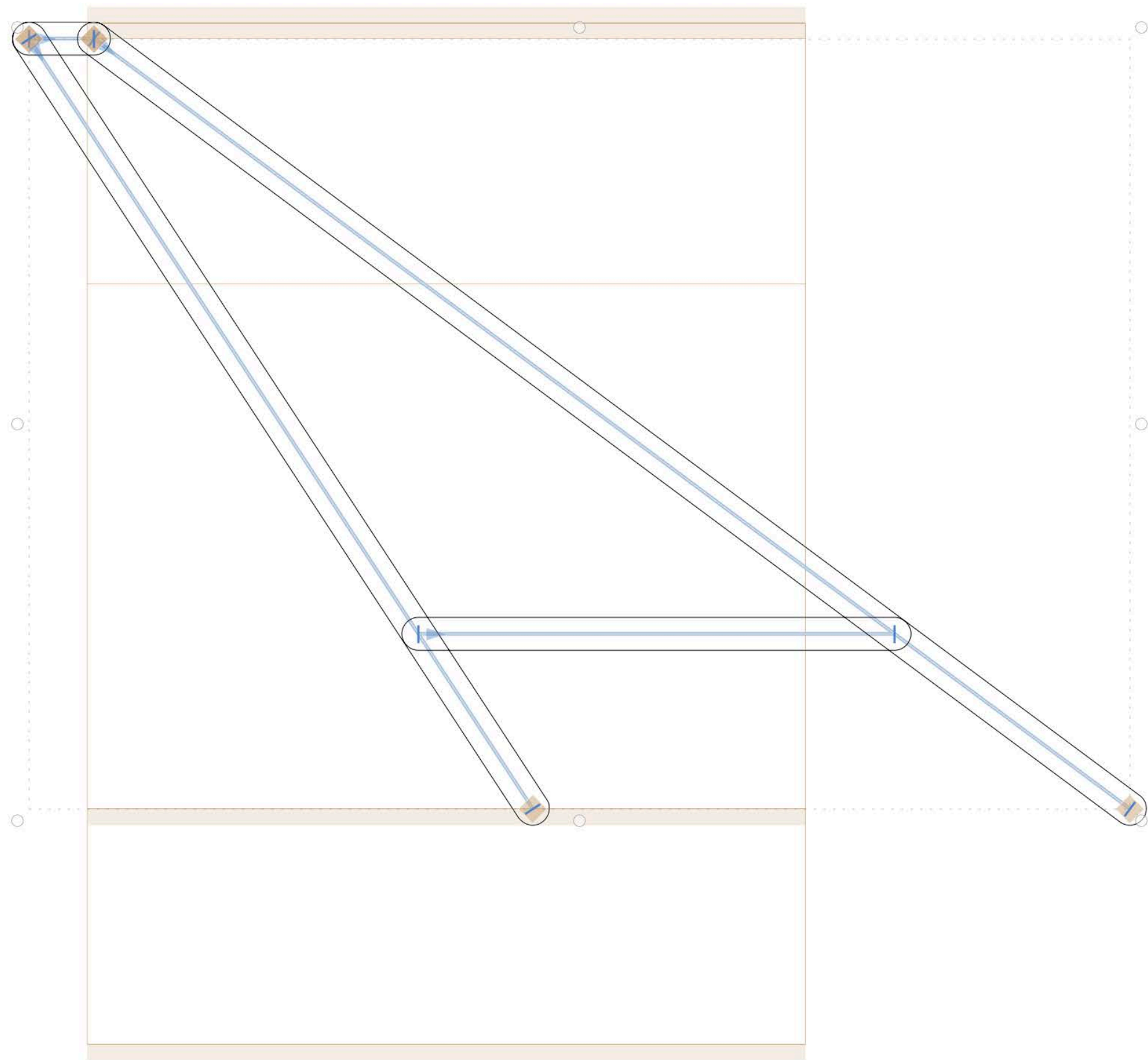


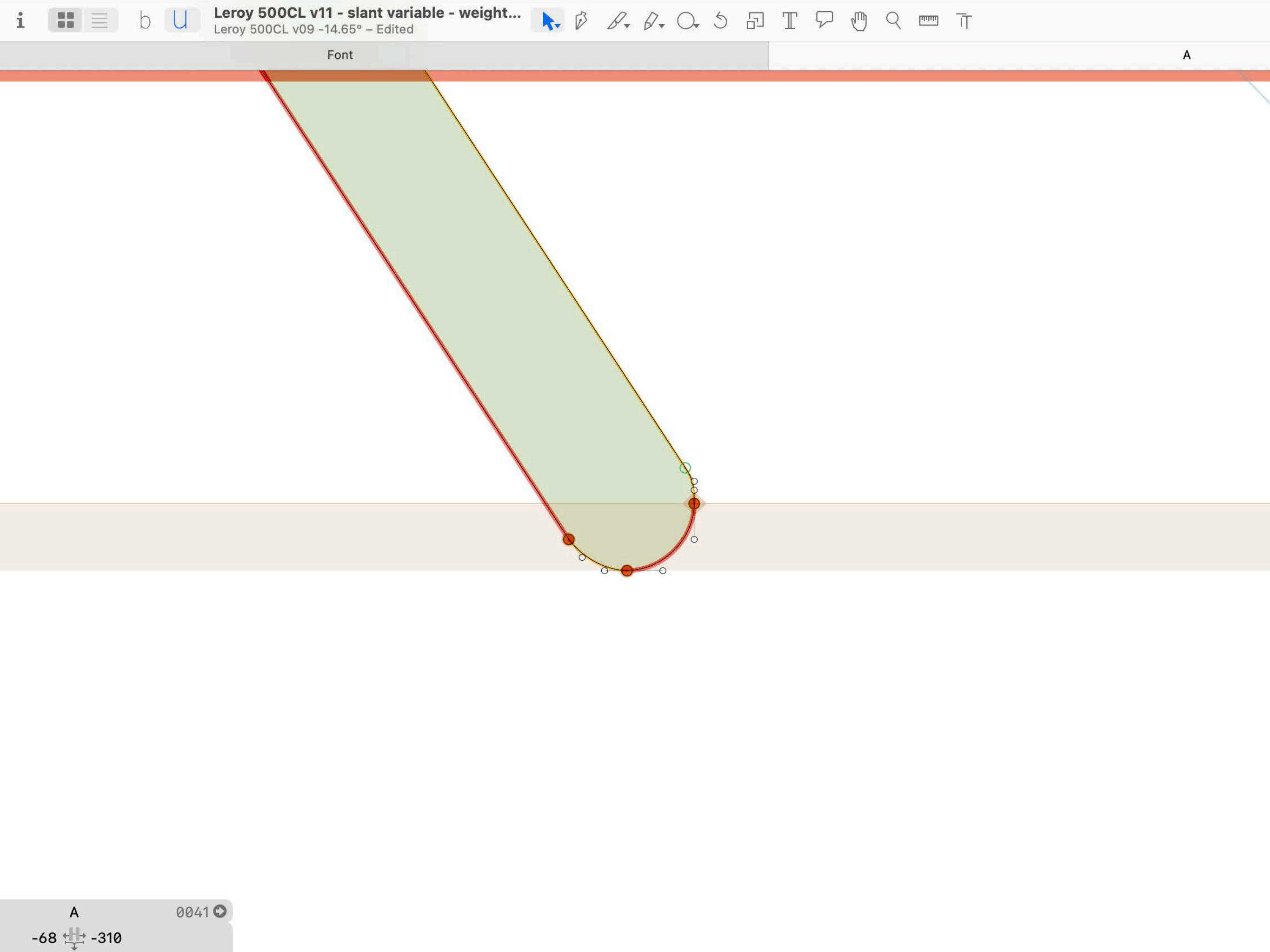
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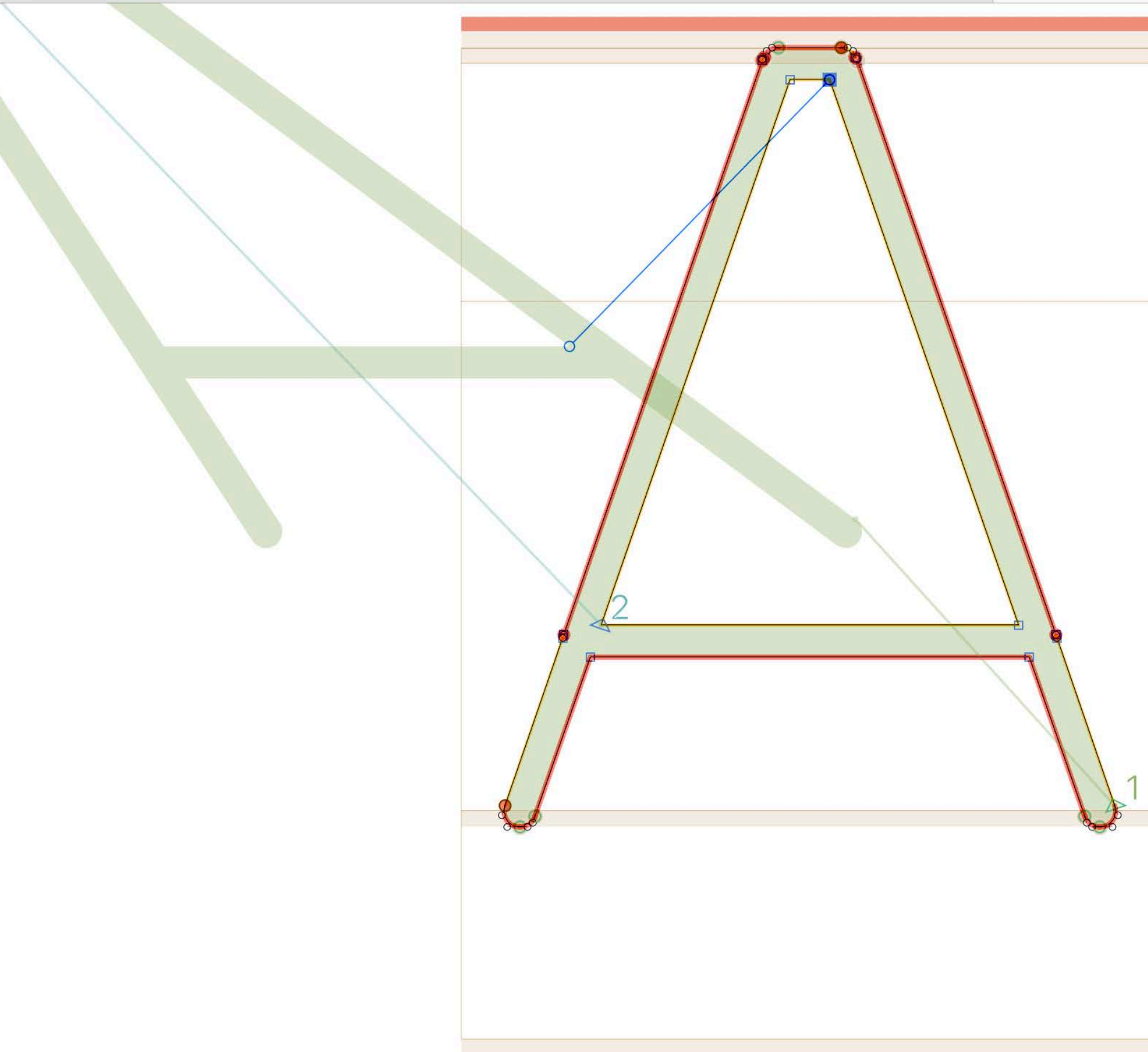
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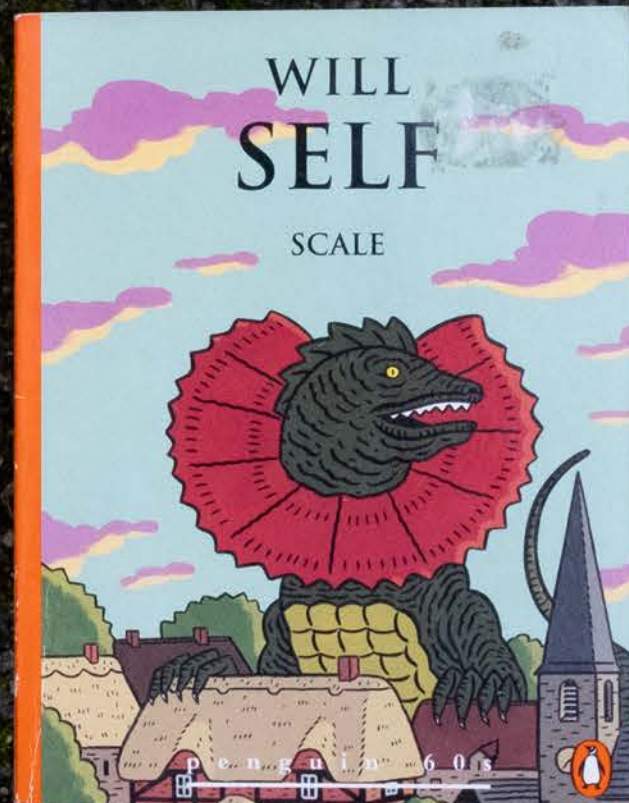
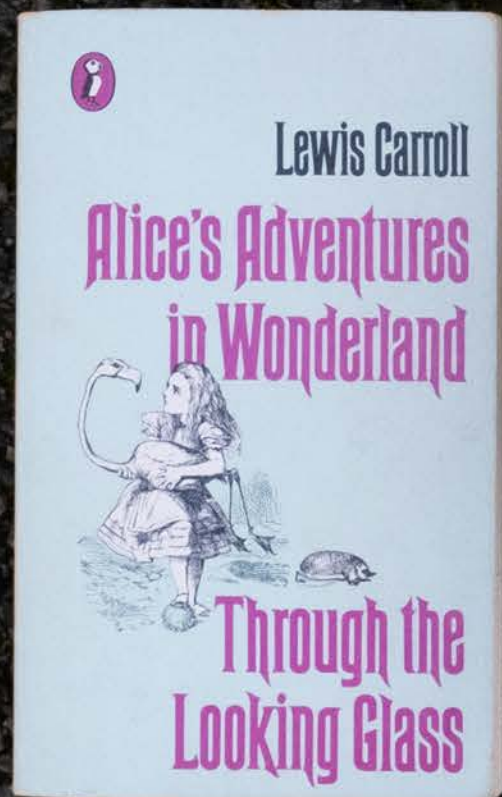
















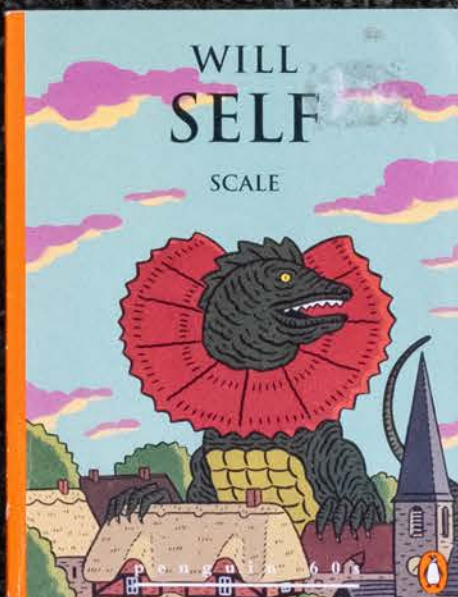
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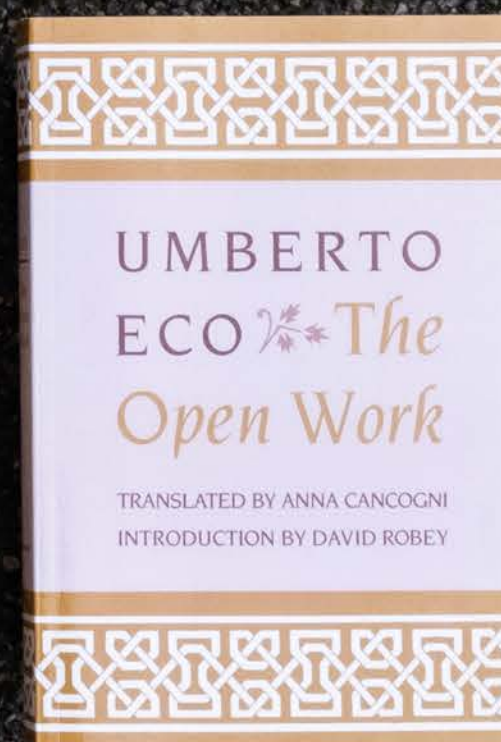
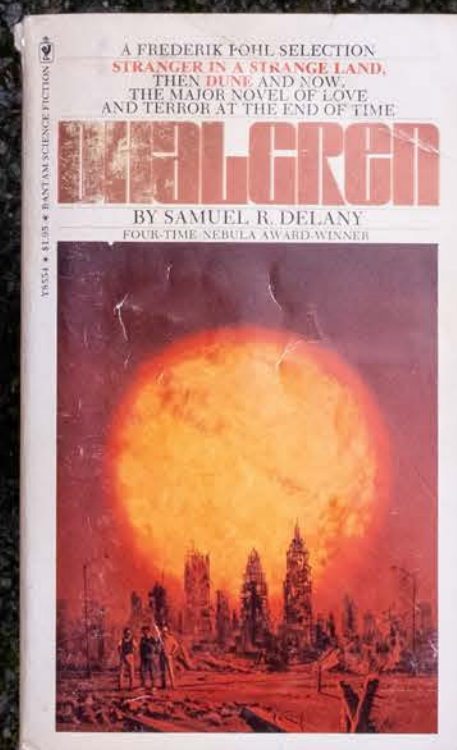
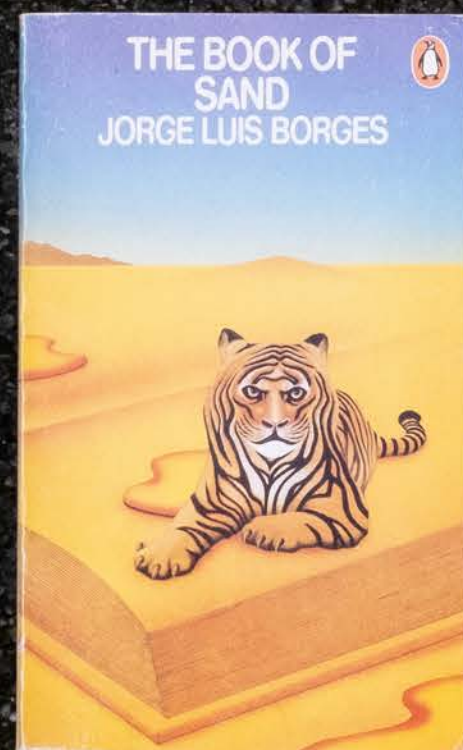
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland



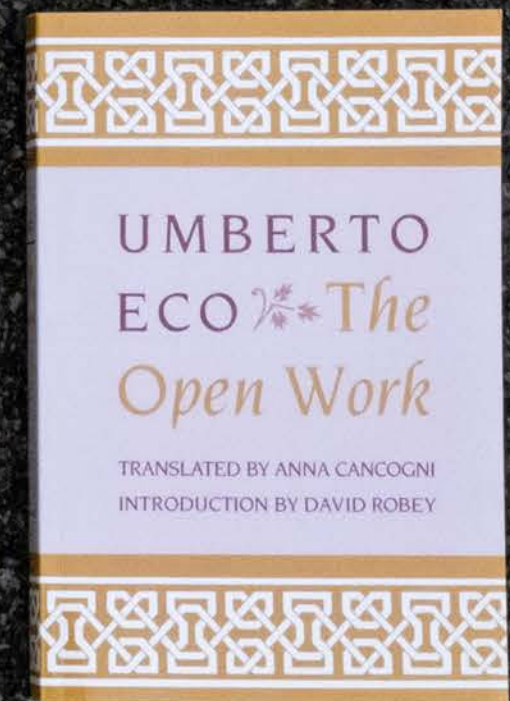
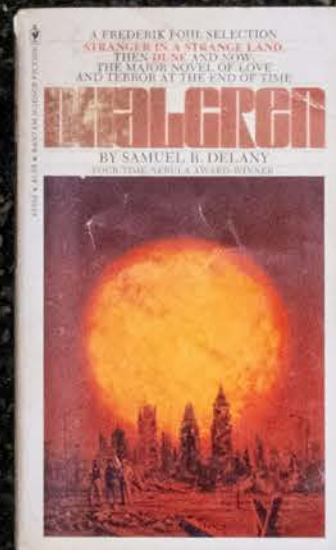
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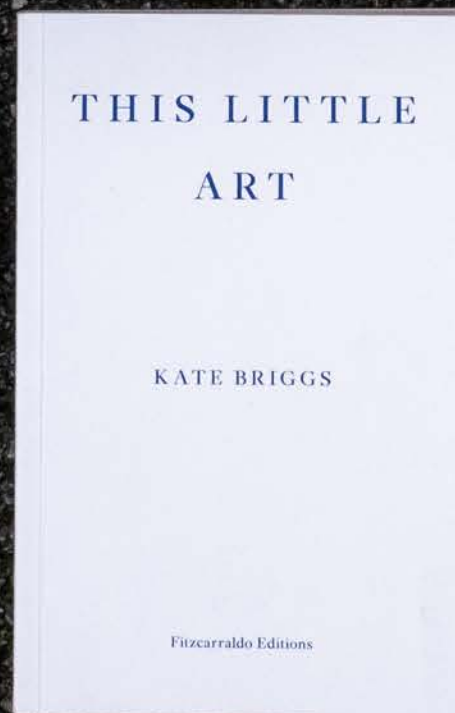
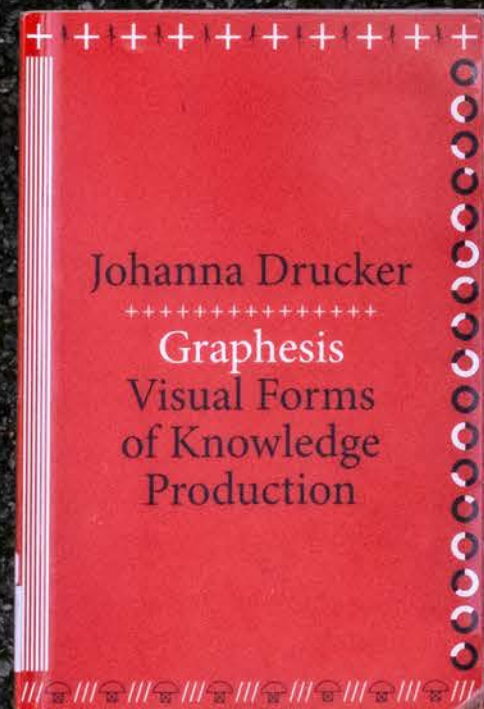
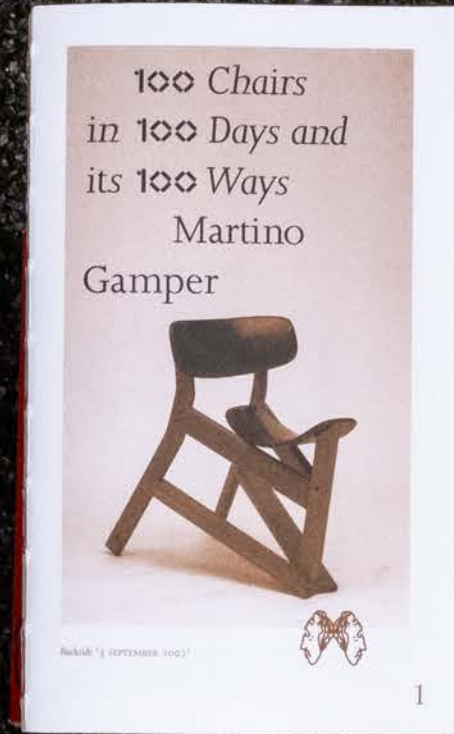
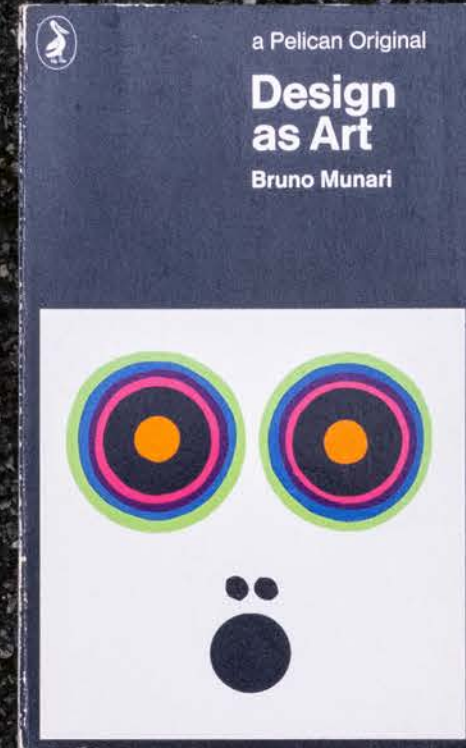
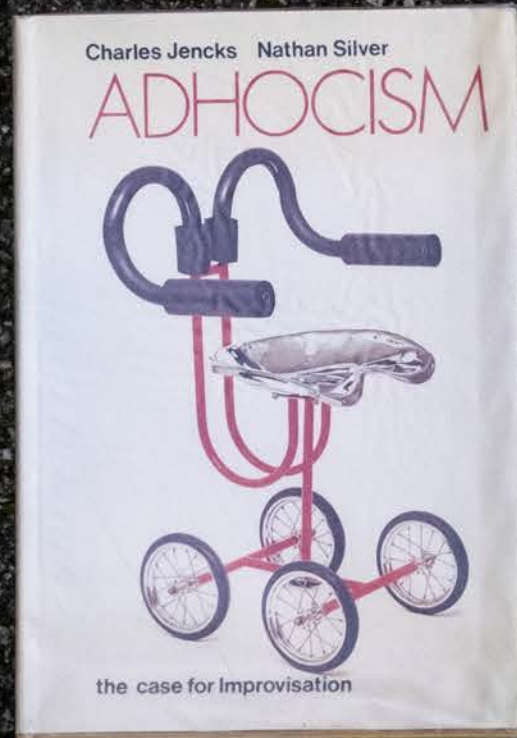
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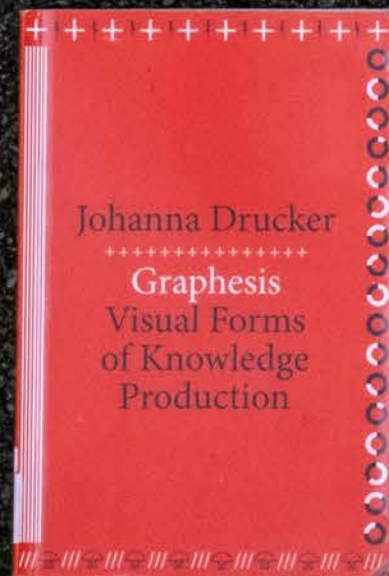
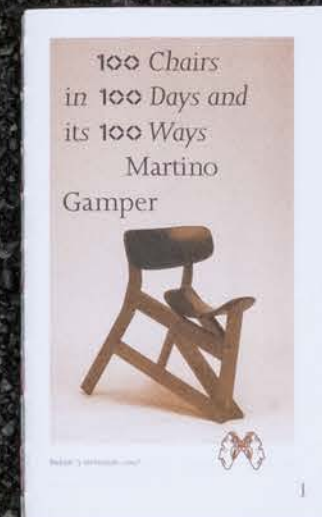
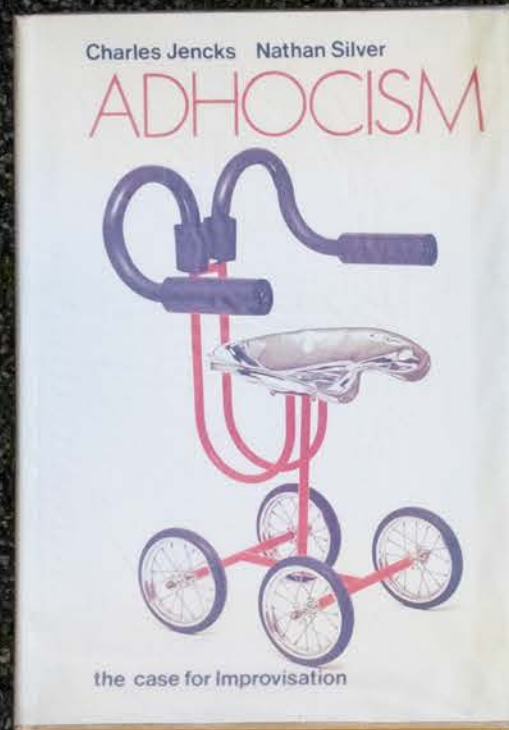










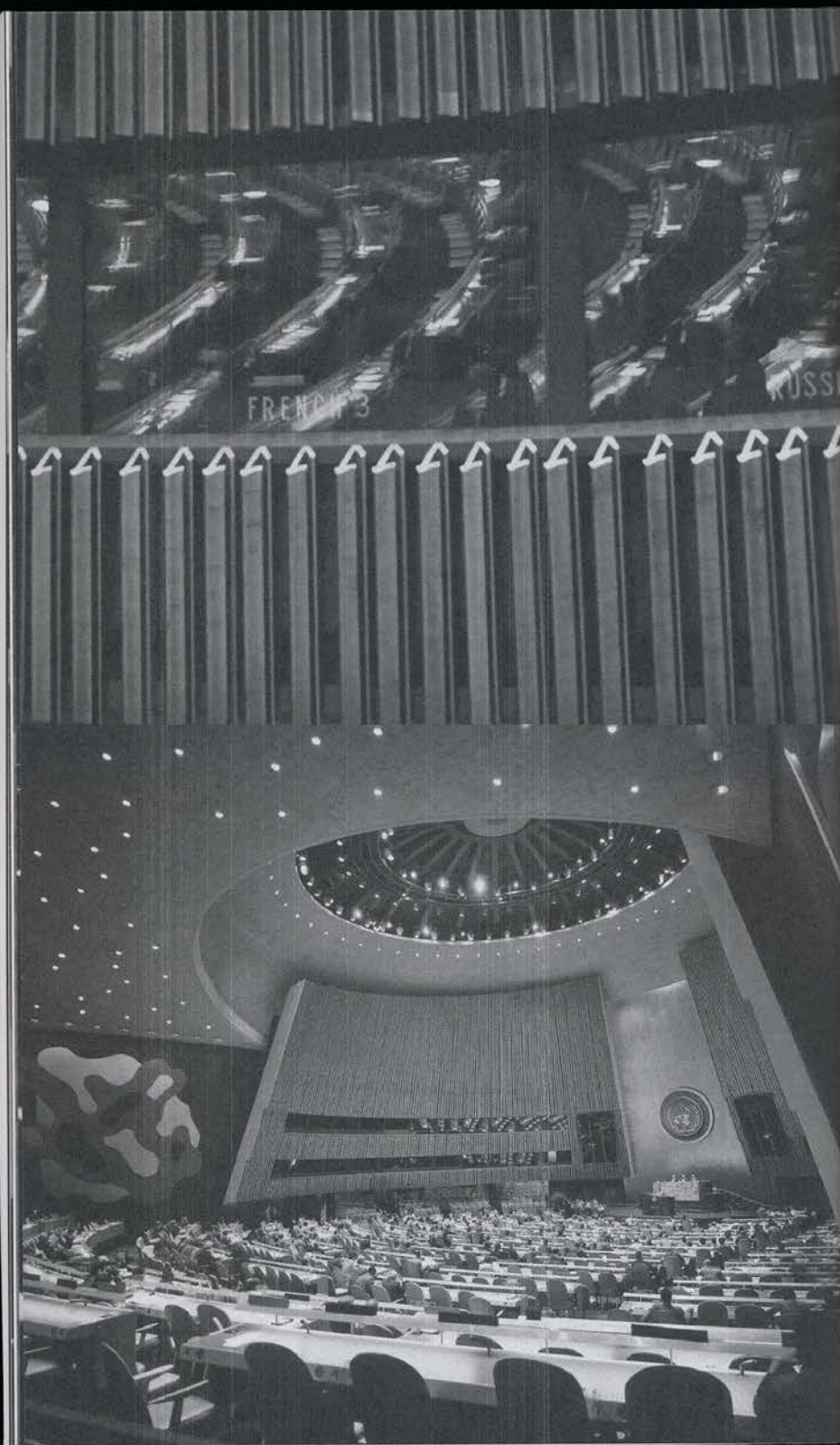


translation =
the reconfiguration of content from
one form to another, or the
transmission of information across
contexts, while maintaining some
degree of technical or semantic
continuity through this change

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz



Graphic design and simultaneous interpretation



In a conference setting, a simultaneous interpreter will often work from a sound-dampening booth adjacent to the meeting space. The booth where Reggie sits in the movie *Charade* is typical—which is to say, quite literally, that it fits the type (or the image). Reggie's booth offers her a clear view of the speakers. From here, she listens to the source-language speaker through headphones and provides an oral translation, spoken into a microphone and likewise transmitted through headphones to her target-language audience.

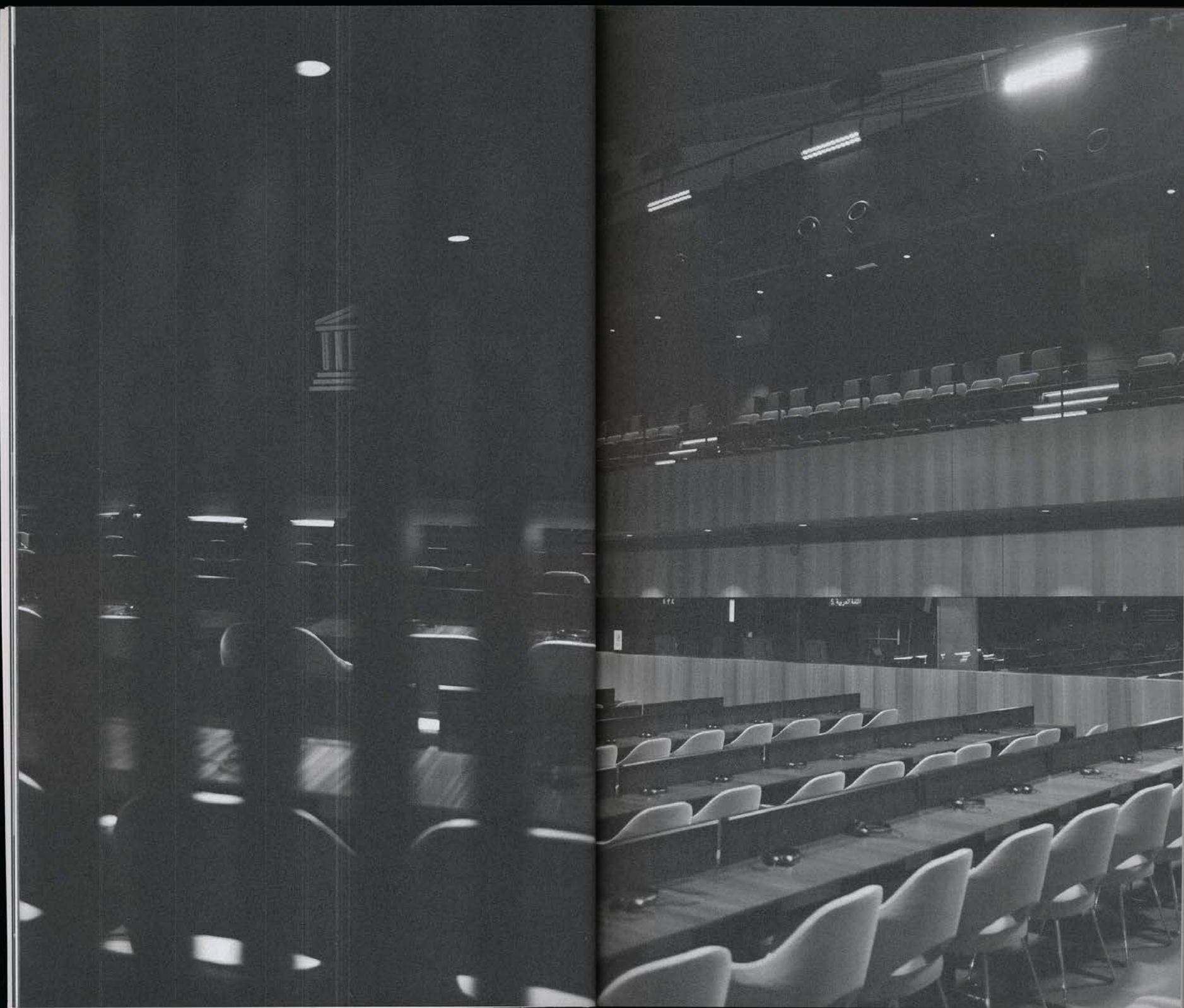
The General Assembly Hall at the UN headquarters in New York City provides the most recognizable image of this context for simultaneous interpretation—justifiably so, as it was probably one of the earliest spaces purpose-built for this method of translation. Earlier experiments in conference interpreting, specifically during the Nuremberg trials (1945–1946) and then at the provisional UN headquarters in Lake Success, New York (1946–1951), had resulted in a clear set of spatial requirements and procedural guidelines that were encoded in the architecture and design of the General Assembly Hall.²

(An aside: The UN's temporary headquarters in Lake Success were located within the headquarters of the Sperry Gyroscope Company—later, the Sperry Corporation—which manufactured navigation instruments.)

In this space, simultaneous interpreters work from two stories of booths built out from the curved walls on either side of the hall. As with other interpretation booths, their primary purpose is, ostensibly, to provide sound-proofing, but here the booths seem frozen in orbit around the assembly floor. They occupy a meta-architectural space, suspended in an intermediary position, both (neither?) within and (nor?) outside of the hall. The booths are forced into an extraterritorial position, a cluster of satellites from which to receive and transmit signals.

But even while the position of the booths serves to isolate the interpreters from the assembly floor, it also makes them more visible. Their elevation grants them a privileged vantage point while simultaneously making their presence even more conspicuous. To mitigate the interpreters' hypervisibility, the interior

² Baigorri-Jalón, *New Insights*, 170–186.

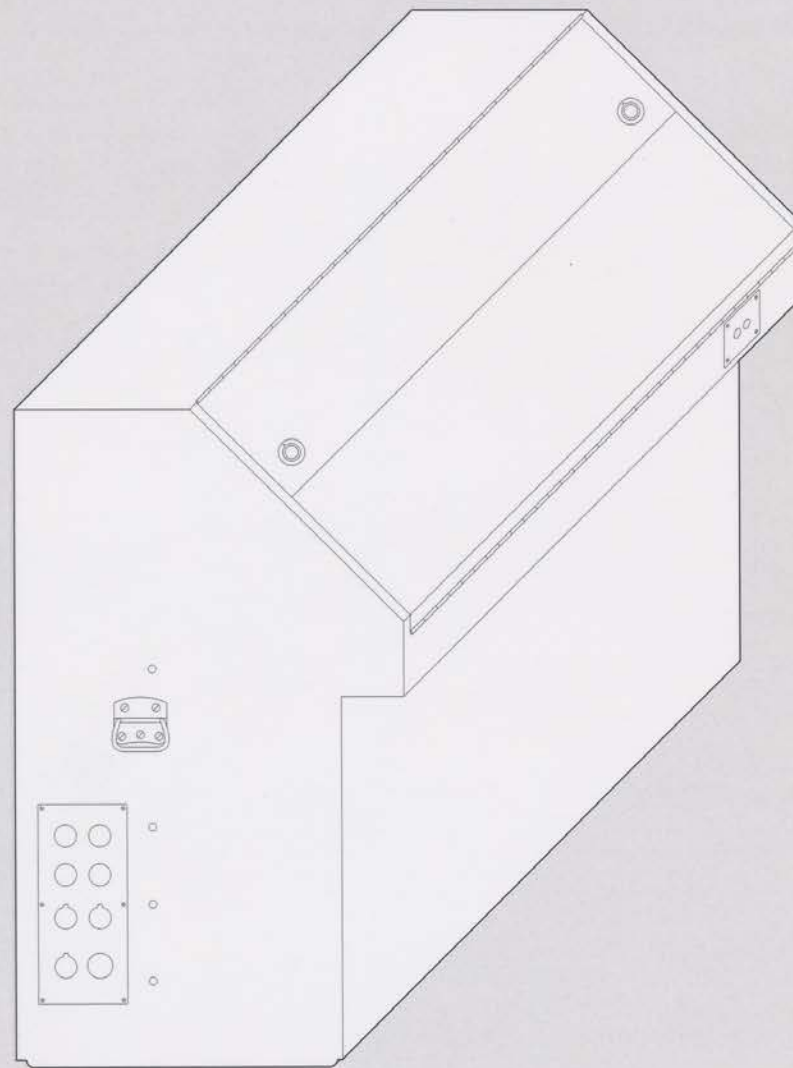




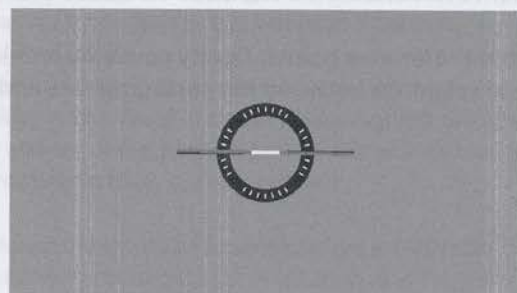
Simultaneous interpretation, briefly defined, is a process of oral translation that happens in real time. The speaker speaks without interruption, while the interpreter simultaneously translates the speaker's words into another language for a specific listener or audience.

The two languages implicated in an interpretation are referred to as the *source* language and the *target* language.

Simultaneous Interpretation
Matthew Chrislip



One of my cameras has an integrated electronic level that, by factory default, is displayed on the back LCD panel whenever I shoot video. The color of the level line turns from red to green when the camera is horizontally level.



Coupling the camera's level with the spirit level in the head of my tripod, I can level my camera along two axes: x and y . The third axis— z —is defined by gravitational pull and is the point of reference for determining the other two.



Leveling my camera and tripod in this way, I've satisfied one condition of land surveying—and I've got the start of an ad hoc theodolite. But I'm missing another essential component: magnification. While leveling accomplishes the purpose of establishing a local geometric constant (the z axis of gravitational pull), magnification visually compresses the field of view along another axis to enable measurement across distances.

Luckily, I have a pair of binoculars on hand. Holding one of the eyecups to my camera lens, I can align my aim to various points across my field of view that are level with my position on my front patio. Things that are distant suddenly seem near.



Sweeping my camera to the left, my view lands on the wall of my patio just a couple meters away. Visually flattened and framed by the circular lens of the binoculars, the concrete of the wall looks like a moon.

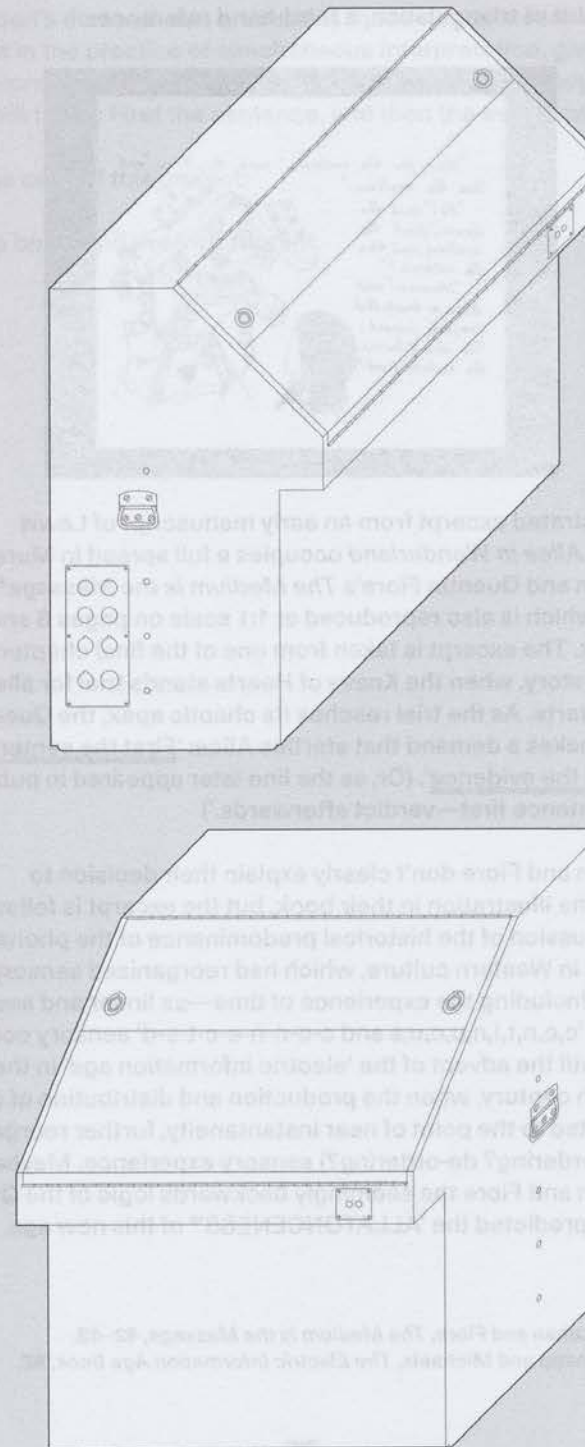


From these improvised elevations, and making guesses about what would be found on the sides that are hidden from view in the photo, I can also extrapolate a parallel projection drawing of the console. Because this type of projection translates three-dimensional space along parallel lines of site, measurements can be taken along any of the three axes of the drawing. There is no foreshortening, no flattening of planes in the image.

The perfect geometry of a parallel projection is only possible from a hypothetical perspective. To achieve this perspective in real space, the viewer would have to be an infinite distance away from the console, at which point the console would be impossible to see. That is, unless the viewer had a lens providing infinite magnification. (The binoculars that I used to construct my ad hoc theodolite were a free gift that my husband and I received when we became National Trust members; they're not up to the task.)

More specifically, the type of projection drawing that I've created is 'oblique', meaning that the projection lines aren't perpendicular to the image plane, which faces the viewer. Even more specifically, it's a 'cavalier' projection. (Because there's another type of oblique projection referred to as 'military', I assume that 'cavalier' refers here to a mounted soldier. But I can't help but interpret the word as a rebuke of the casual and offhanded nature of my approach to these technical drawings.)

Looking at two cavalier projections of the console side by side, it's hard to believe that they represent the same object. Because each is drawn with a different plane facing the viewer, the two projections appear to represent wildly different proportions. And yet both interpretations of the console are measurably accurate along all three axes. They are, technically speaking, equally correct translations.





- 12 A collective image of the simultaneous interpreter...
- 15 Simultaneous interpretation, briefly defined...
- 20 An extraterritorial position in simultaneous interpretation...
- 23 Call and response...
- 27 An ad hoc theodolite...
- 30 Simultaneous interpretation control console...
- 34 Cavalier projections...
- 36 First the sentence, and then the evidence...

lights of the interpretation booths are generally kept dim, but this only further complicates their relationship to the assembly floor. The brightness differential effectively turns the booth windows into mirrors, creating a panopticon-like condition of constant—if only presumed—surveillance over the assembly floor.

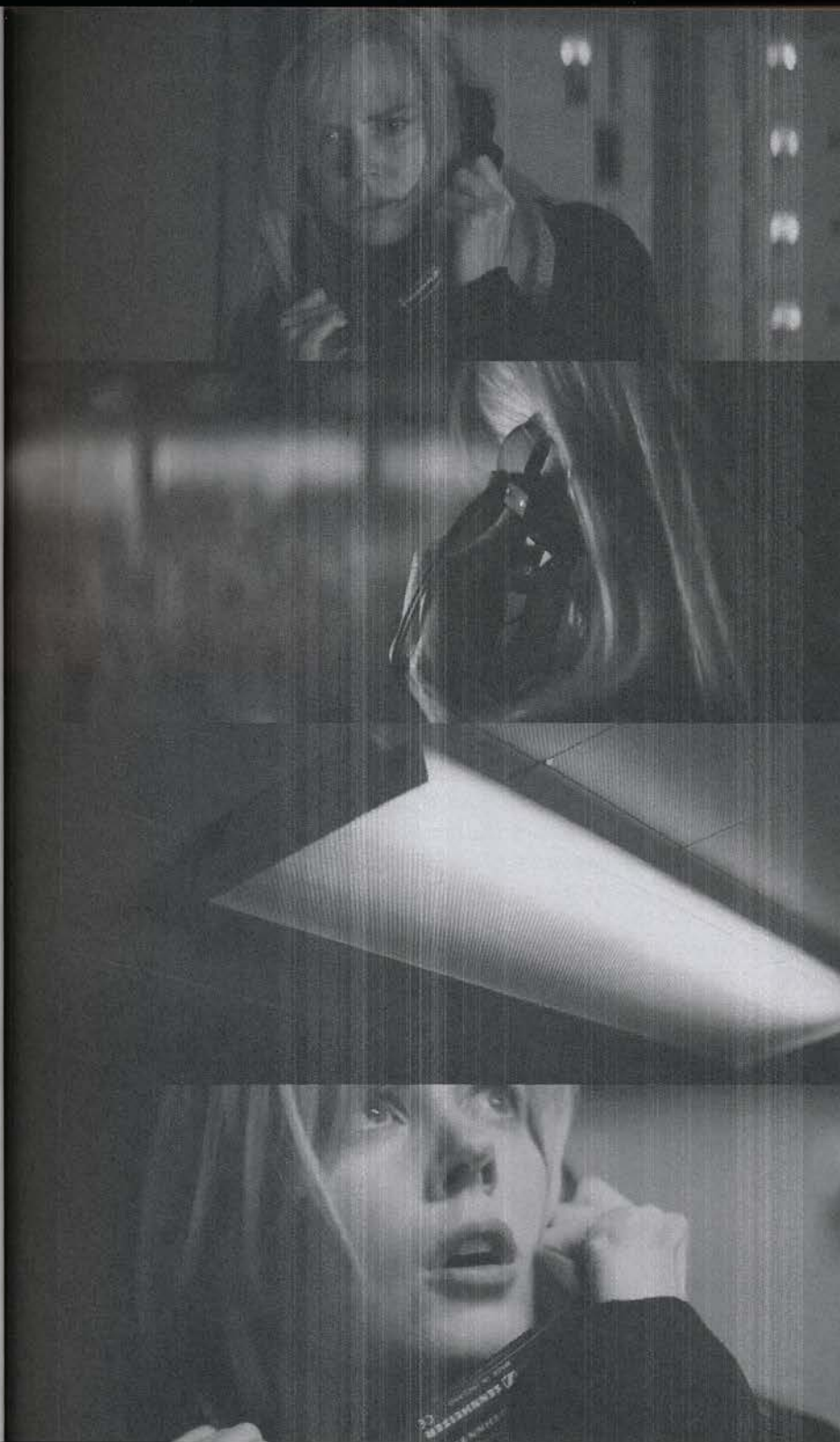
This lighting differential is reversed in the 2005 film *The Interpreter*, whose main character—once again a simultaneous interpreter, a woman, and a natural polyglot with an international education, this time played by Nicole Kidman—returns to her booth in the General Assembly after hours, when then lights are dimmed throughout the hall.³ While there, she overhears a conversation happening in secret on the darkened assembly floor and being inadvertently transmitted to her booth via her headset. Just as she begins to understand that the conversation concerns an assassination plot, the lights inside her booth flicker on, drawing the attention of those on the floor. She's not sure if she has been recognized, but the very uncertainty of her discovery by the would-be assassins injects the film with dramatic tension.

All of this suggests that this extraterritoriality is very intentional, and that it serves many purposes that go well beyond the isolation of sound. The significance of an extraterritorial position in simultaneous interpretation—socially, politically, and spatially—is even more obvious when considered alongside another form of interpretation: *chuchotage*. Taken from a French word meaning 'whispering,' this form of translation relies on the interpreter having immediate access to the listener and speaking directly into the listener's ear in a low voice.

The proximity of its interpreters to those in power, or their existing membership within a privileged class, was apparently a concern in the UN, which in the 1960s shifted from employing natural polyglots—often from families with connections to government—to using trained interpreters.⁴ Socially as well as physically, interpreters were moved further from the speakers and listeners, and deeper into an extraterritorial position.

3 Pollack, *The Interpreter*, 0:10:18.

4 Baigorri-Jalón, *Interpreters at the United Nations*, 168–169.



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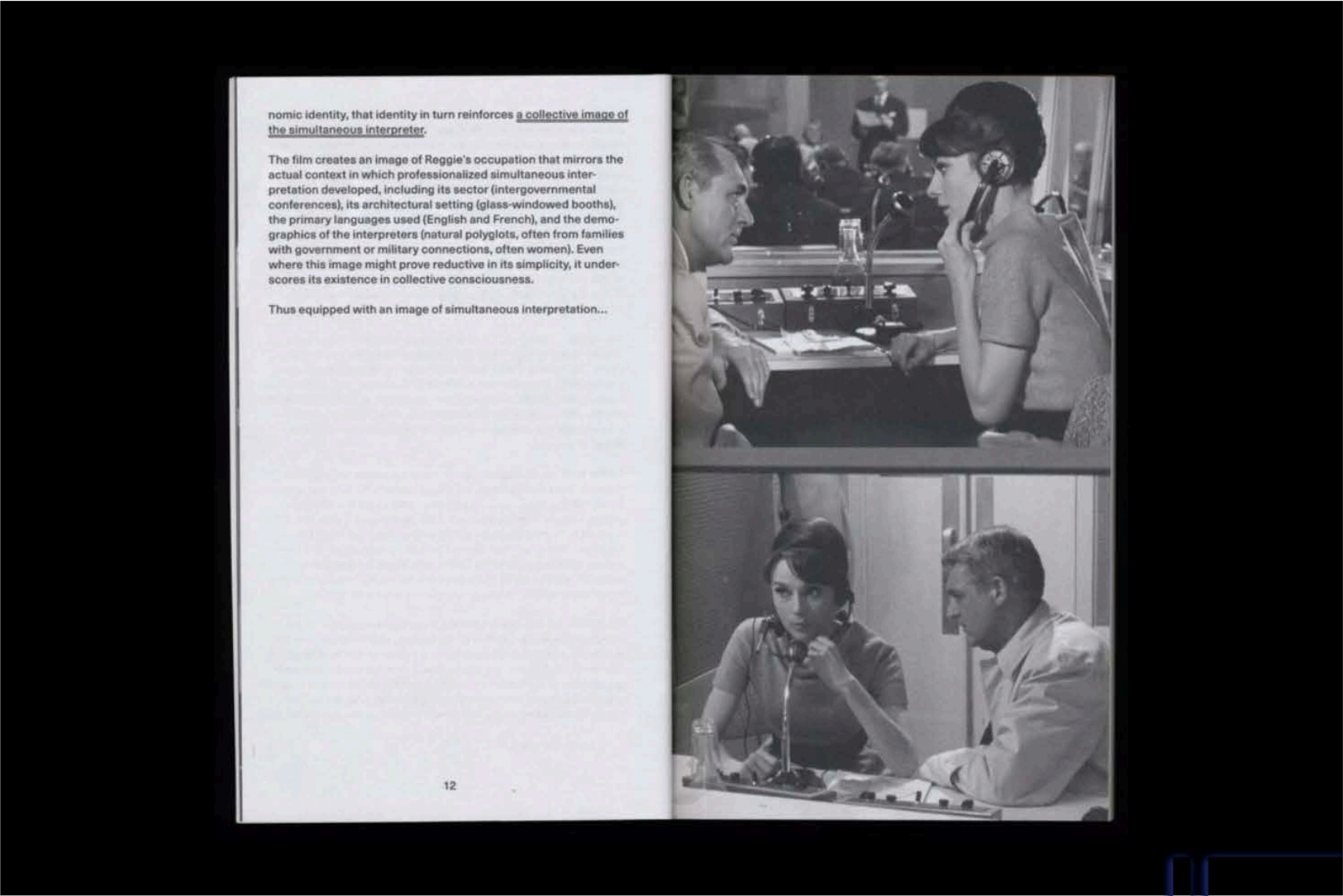
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Simultaneous Interpretation

AUTHOR: Matthew Chrislip

Graphic design and literary translation

process in literature. This, we will see, has consequences for the singular tone and unclassifiable genre of her narratives.

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- ¶ 3 Before exploring some of the modalities of this approach, let us recall Hélène Cixous' claim of 'elective kinship' with those writers, female and male, who speak different languages but with accents akin, with those writers, haunted by the Poem, the poetic differential.

- ¶ 4 What binds me to my elective kinship, what keeps me in the magnetic attraction of my spiritual guides, is not a question of style or metaphors, it is instead what they are constantly thinking about: the idea of fire, over which we maintain a collusive silence, so that we never stop thinking about it. No complacency. Only the confession of the fear of fire. And the compulsion to face the fear.⁴

What ties me to my elective relatives, what holds me in the lure of my spiritual guides, is not the question of style, or of metaphors, it is what they think about incessantly, the idea of fire, over which we maintain a stealthy silence, so as not to stop thinking about it. No complacency. Only the admitting of the fear of fire. And the compulsion to confront the fear.⁵

Prenowitz [+]

- ¶ 5 *Between* them, it is, then, a question of desire, of energetic impulse, whereby writing 'the idea of fire' means, in every sense, to put to the test, or to the proof: of forces consumed, of laying down traces, of proofing. From the outset, the work itself becomes excessive, promethean, movement of transmission, caught in the legacy of the passion for reading and writing. Overflowing and over-flowed, such is the advent of writing.

- ¶ 6 Without Shakespeare with Poe, at first, and immediately without Homer, without: The Old Testament, Kleist, Kafka, Dostoyevsky and later without: Clarice Lispector, Marina Tsvetaeva with Anna Akhmatova, without Thomas Bernhard with Ingeborg Bachmann, without Nelly Sachs and... I could not have lived.⁶

Print

Ce qui me lie à ma parenté élective, qui me tient dans l'attrance de mes guides spirituels, ce n'est pas la question du style ni des métaphores, c'est ce à quoi ils pensent sans arrêt, l'idée du feu, sur laquelle nous gardons un silence complice, afin de ne pas cesser d'y penser. Aucune complaisance. Seulement l'aveu de la peur du feu. Et la compulsion d'affronter la peur.

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“The essay as forms of rewriting: Cixous to Montaigne” is a translation of Mireille Calle-Gruber’s “L’essai comme forme de réécriture: Cixous à Montaigne”, originally published in Études françaises vol. 40, n° 1, 2004, p. 29-42 (doi.org/10.7202/008474ar).

In this piece, Mireille Calle-Gruber explores Hélène Cixous’s lineage with Montaigne’s own lifework *Les Essais*. Drawing on a number of Cixous’s books, she writes about the genealogical and generative forces of literature, the human condition and the ‘kitchen’ of literature.

This interdisciplinary translation project was funded by Arts Council England, through the Developing your Creative Practice scheme, and undertaken by Caroline Rabourdin in collaboration with translator Sophie Lewis and

The Open Work

Umberto Eco

Translated by Anna Cancogni

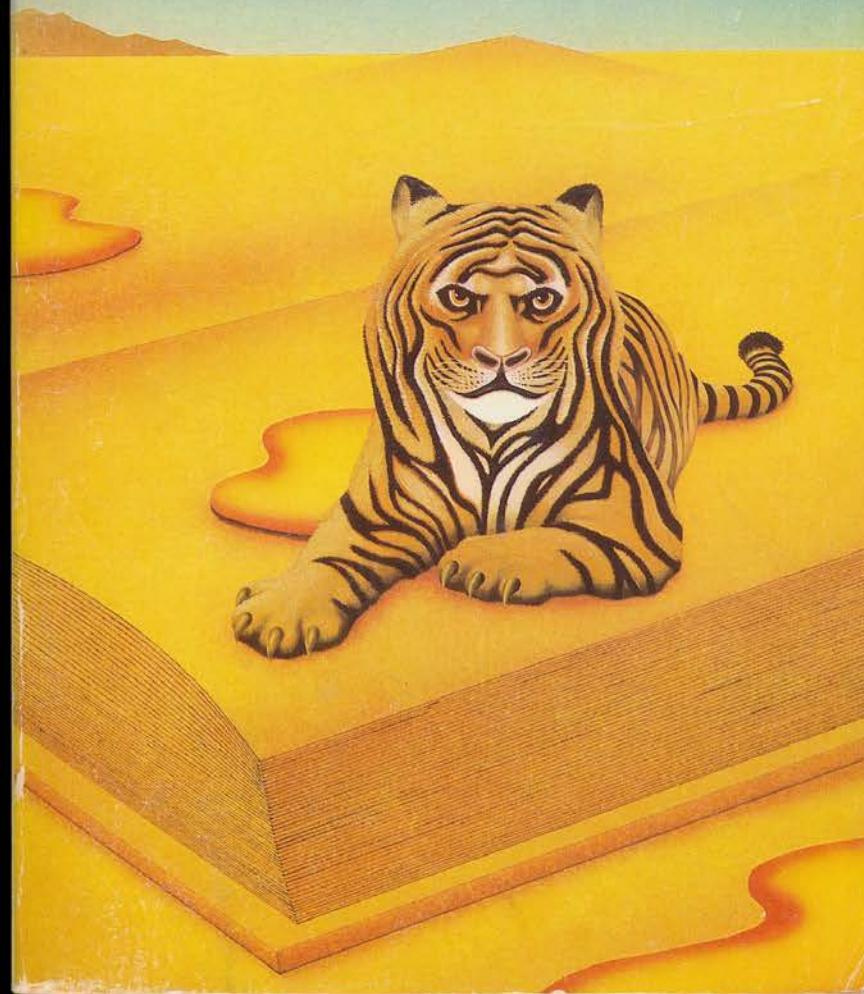
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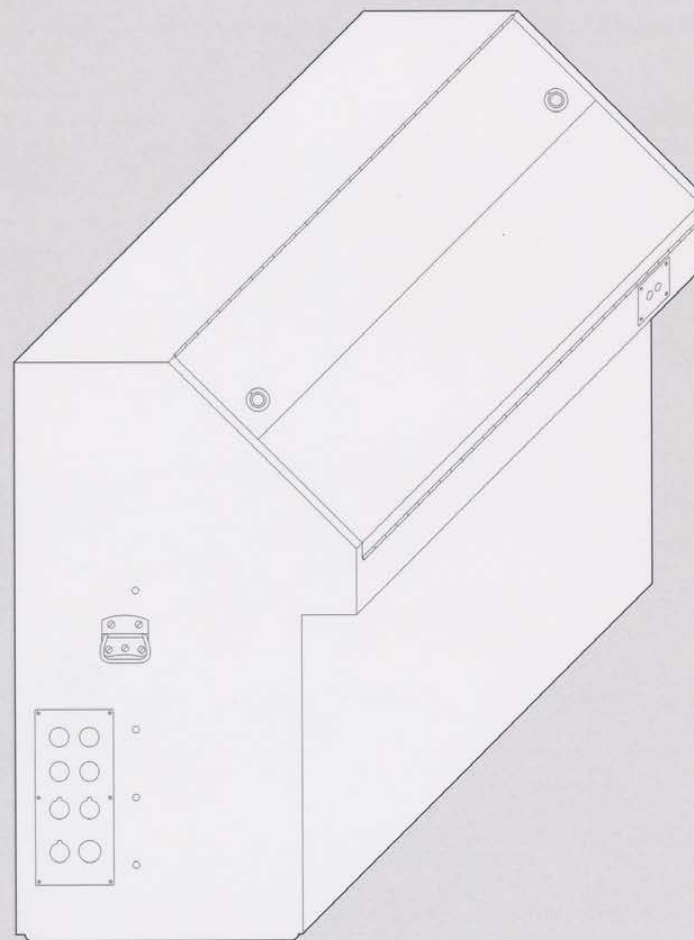
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THE BOOK OF
SAND
JORGE LUIS BORGES



Simultaneous Interpretation
Matthew Chrislip



"Now for the evidence," said the King, "and then the sentence."

"No!" said the Queen, "first the sentence, and then the evidence!"

"Nonsense!" cried Alice, so loudly that everybody jumped, "the idea of having the sentence first!"



"Now for the evidence," said the King, "and then the sentence."

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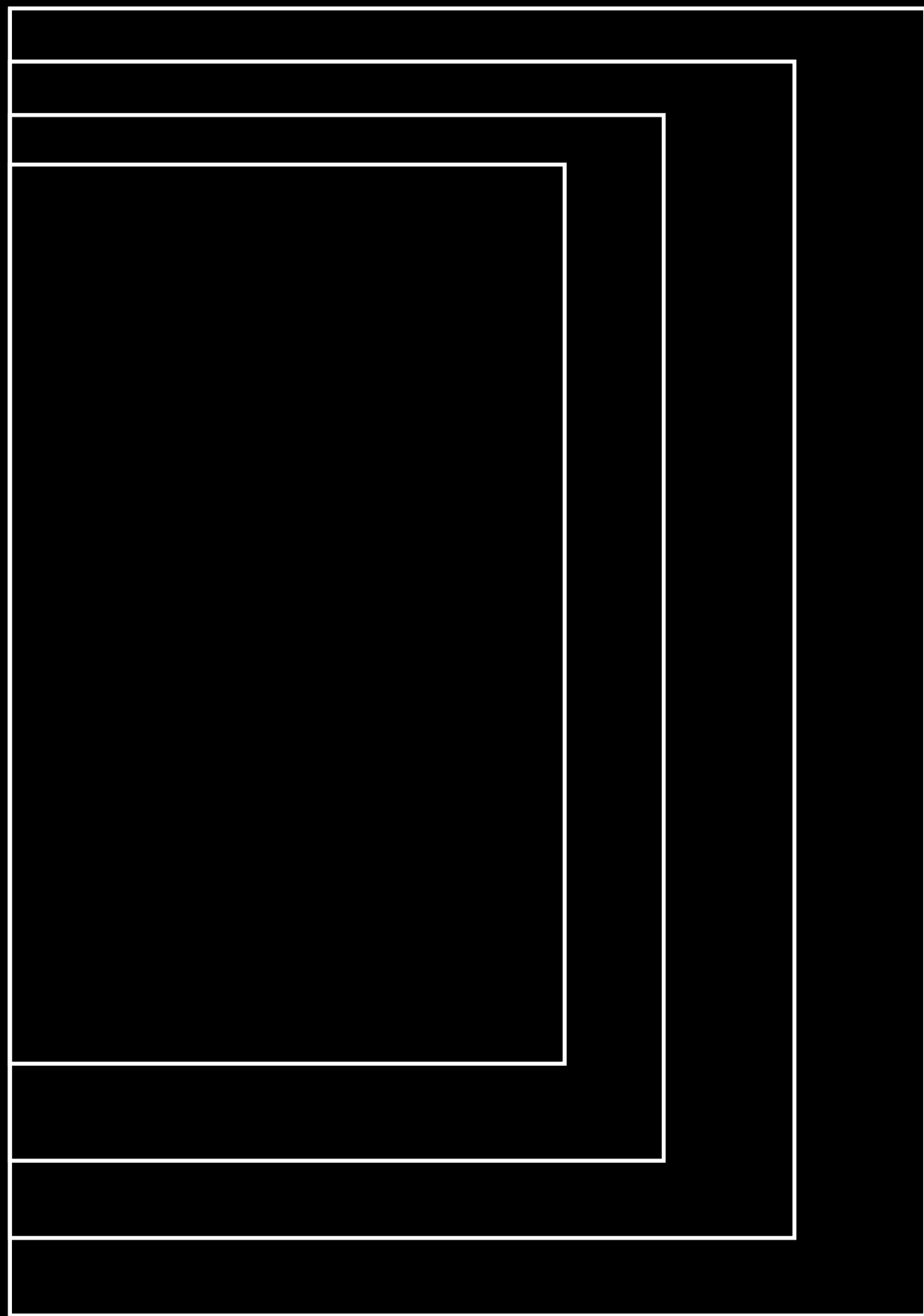


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Explanatory note

This document contains a series of books that increase in size by one inch (or roughly so) in both width and height, conforming to trade standards available through the print-on-demand publisher Lulu. Each increase in size introduces a new level of quotation, enabling each book to reproduce, annotate, interpret, or otherwise contextualize the one below it.

The smallest book, in pocket format (~4x7 inches), publishes the bibliography for my ongoing {practice} {research}. The 5x8 book, sometimes referred to simply as *Simultaneous Interpretation*, is the primary site of my experimentation, and it references the source material represented in the ~4x7 bibliography. The 6x9 book is a draft of my PhD dissertation, and it likewise quotes from and contextualizes the 5x8 book.

This document, in 7x10 format, contains all of the smaller books, reproducing them at their original scales and in their live states.

The numbers listed in the above table of contents correspond to this 7x10 document's pagination (which appears in white text at the foot of each page). Each book reproduced here also has its own page numbers.

The PDF version of this document, because it has been exported as spreads rather than single pages, introduces an additional layer of page numbering, but these numbers have not been typeset into the page layouts.

Simultaneous Interpretation
(through dissertation)

Matthew Chrislip

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whom he identifies as an 'orthographer' from the 'toponymic department', to translate or transliterate Irish place names as they are mapped.⁵

Friel elaborates on this work in the stage directions at the start of the second act:

5 Friel, *Translations*, 29.



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Matthew Chrislip

Course Leader

MA Graphic Communication Design

Central Saint Martins, UAL

m.chrislip@csm.arts.ac.uk

PhD candidate

School of Design

RMIT University

matthew@dowland.us