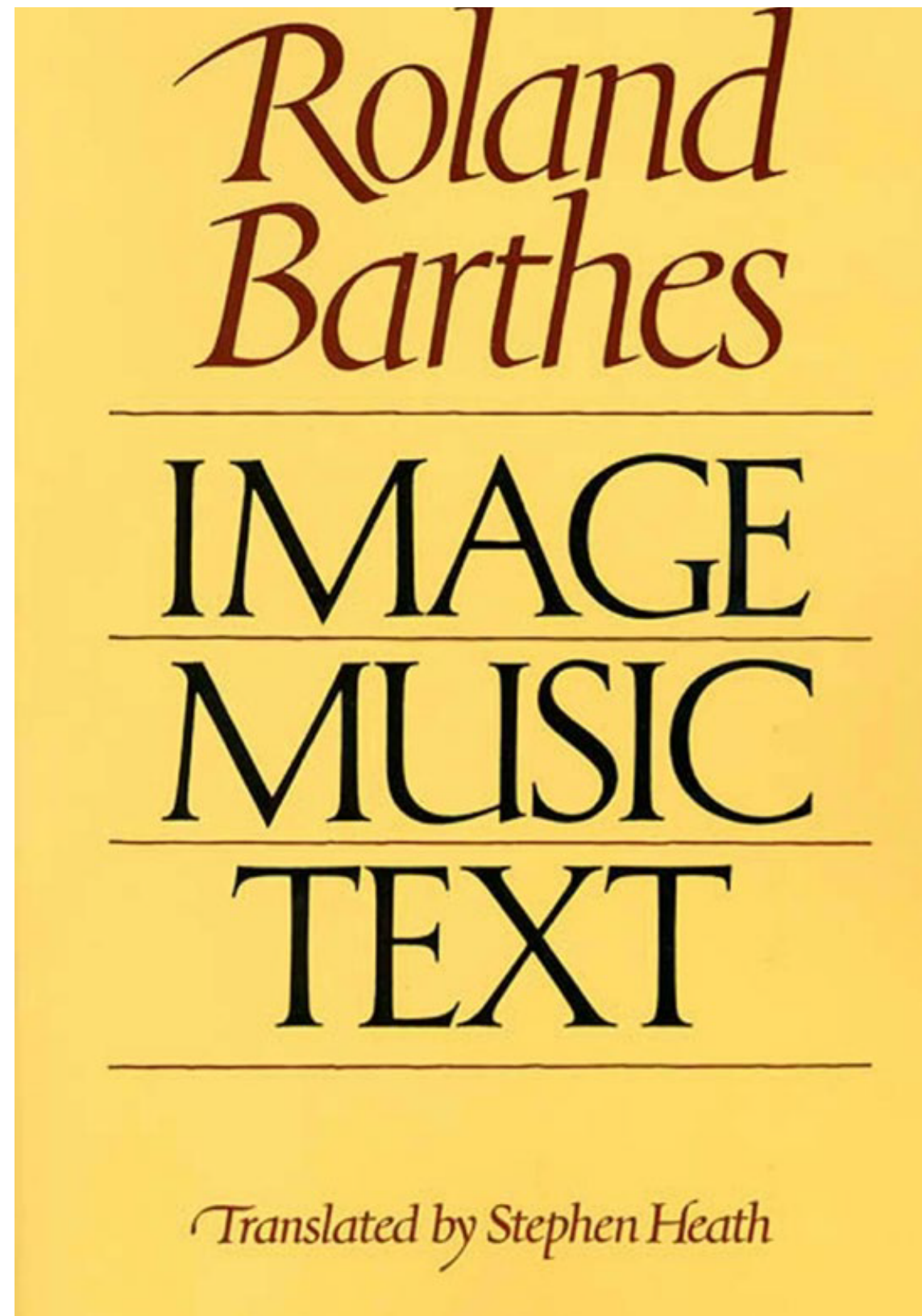


Position through Contextualising - Written Component - Key references (2)



Barthes, R. (1977) 'Rhetoric of the Image'

"Image Music Text"

In Roland Barthes' Rhetoric of the Image, language functions as a mechanism of "anchorage," which serves to limit the polysemy of the image. Through naming and description, language guides the viewer toward a preferred interpretation, effectively constraining and stabilizing meaning. Within this framework, language operates as a stable external structure that regulates how images are read.

In this project, however, this relationship is reconfigured. While audio description initially appears to extend the logic of anchorage — translating visual content into language — this stability is disrupted when the visual conditions of the image, such as brightness and movement, begin to influence the formation and transformation of the text itself. Language no longer occupies a controlling position. Instead, anchorage becomes unstable: rather than fixing meaning, language is continuously shaped and rewritten by the image.

As a result, text ceases to function as a framework for interpreting the image. It becomes a surface upon which the traces and conditions of the image are inscribed, allowing the image to persist and operate within language itself.

Barthes chose an advertisement as his primary example because advertisements are one of the most condensed and efficient design forms, they need to combine the least words with accurate images to generate an intuitive and effective meaning. In graphic design, choices such as typography and the placement of text are always critical decisions.

What Barthes offers to the field of graphic design is that he provides a more active way to think of the relationship between text and image, more like researching the interaction. In addition, the caption or text is not only to anchor the meaning of image, but also can produce new meaning through the dialogue.

Reading this text has led me to reconsider the relationship between text and image. In my project, the text is influenced by the background image which changes its conditions, like a reverse of anchorage. Furthermore, in my last experiment, I introduced different levels of visibility to the text, so that every text and image have multiple layers of relationship, and use typographic conditions to echo the original scene. In other words, text will be anchored not only by its meaning but also by its condition.



Banner, F. (1997) The Nam

Banner transcribed the complete visual content of six Vietnam War films into words, producing a densely written book with no images. The sheer volume of text makes it impossible to read in any conventional sense. It exceeds the limits of comprehension and becomes a visual object that can only be perceived, not understood. This is not a formal unreadability caused by distortion or fragmentation, but a conceptual unreadability produced by excess: language overwhelms itself through accumulation. The image loses its original visual continuity and is reborn as the physical weight of language.

Of all the qualities an image carries, what Banner preserves is its continuity. The temporal sequence of the films is converted into the spatial volume of text. Time disappears, but continuity persists as physical mass. This act of translation does not reconstruct the image; it replaces one kind of presence with another.

What strikes me most about this work is how Banner achieves extreme tension through minimal means. A single typeface, a single size, a single arrangement, no other formal intervention. The tension comes entirely from the quantity and density of language itself. This restraint challenged me to consider how little formal intervention is needed for text to become something other than readable language.

This work forms a direct contrast with my project. Banner uses the physical volume of language to carry the continuity of image. Language attempts to contain image through accumulation. My system works differently: rather than language absorbing image, image conditions enter language through its own typographic parameters, size, spacing, opacity, and alter it from within. Both approaches push language beyond its function as a carrier of meaning, but in opposite directions. Banner moves outward, expanding language until it becomes image. My system moves inward, letting image conditions reshape the body of language itself.

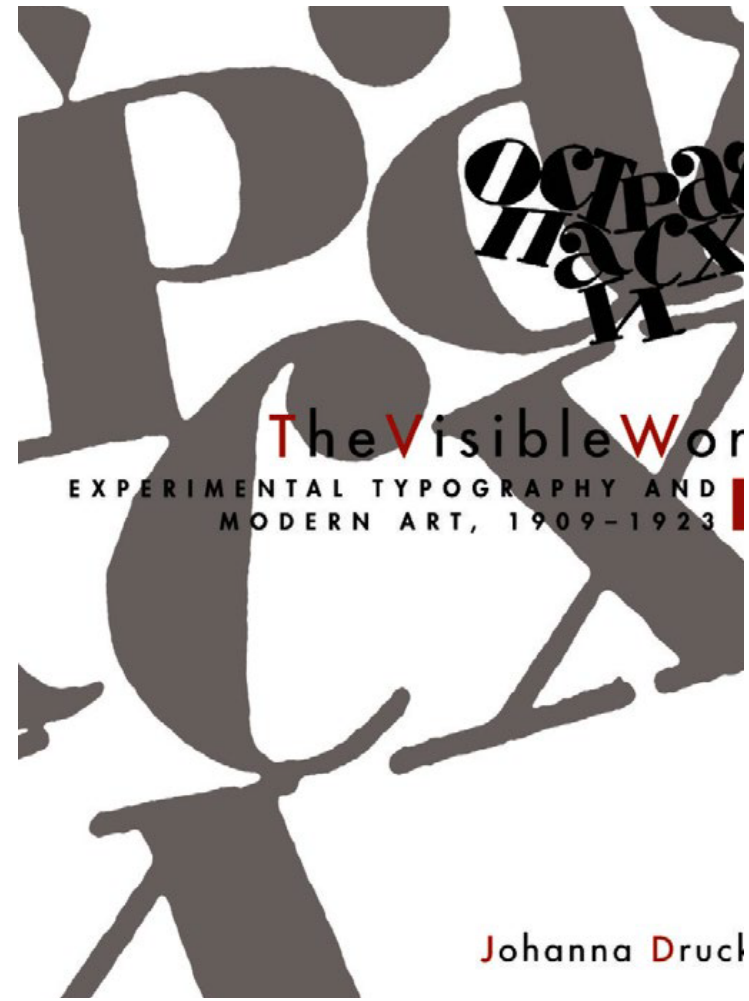
In the traditional path of graphic communication design, the materiality of typography like the proportion, form and weight, is based on designer's choices. However, in The Nam, the meaning of form is from the accumulation of materiality — not because of what typography looks like, but how many and how much weight of them. The meaning comes from the quantity, not from the shape.

In conclusion, Fiona Banner's The Nam reveals a possibility that the meaning of form is not necessarily from designers' choices, but coming from the condition of the materiality. And this makes me rethink my system: I'm not designing typography's form, I use the condition of the image to decide typography's form.

- Reference. Text.
1. Barthes, R. (1977) 'Rhetoric of the Image', in Image Music Text. London: Fontana Press, pp. 32–51.
 2. Drucker, J. (2020) 'Introduction' and 'Semiotics, Materiality, and Typographic Practice', in The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art, 1909–1923.
 3. Lust, M. et al. (eds.) (2020) Conditional Design Workbook. Amsterdam: Valiz.
 4. Flusser, V. (1983) 'The Apparatus', in Towards a Philosophy of Photography. London: Reaktion Books.
 5. Steyerl, H. (2012) 'In Defense of the Poor Image', in The Wretched of the Screen. Berlin: Sternberg Press, pp. 31–45.

- Works.
1. Banner, F. (1997) The Nam [Artist's book].
 2. Frampton, H. (1970) Zorns Lemma [Film]. USA.
 3. Niu, Jun Qiang (2020) Reveal [Video installation].
 4. Palmer, Ollie (2016) 24fps Psycho [Video / digital work].
 5. Marker, C. (1983) Sans Soleil [Film]. France.
 4. Hito Steyerl (2013) How Not to be Seen. A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File [Video / digital work]
 5. Gordon, D. (1993) 24 Hour Psycho [Video installation]. London: Hayward Gallery.

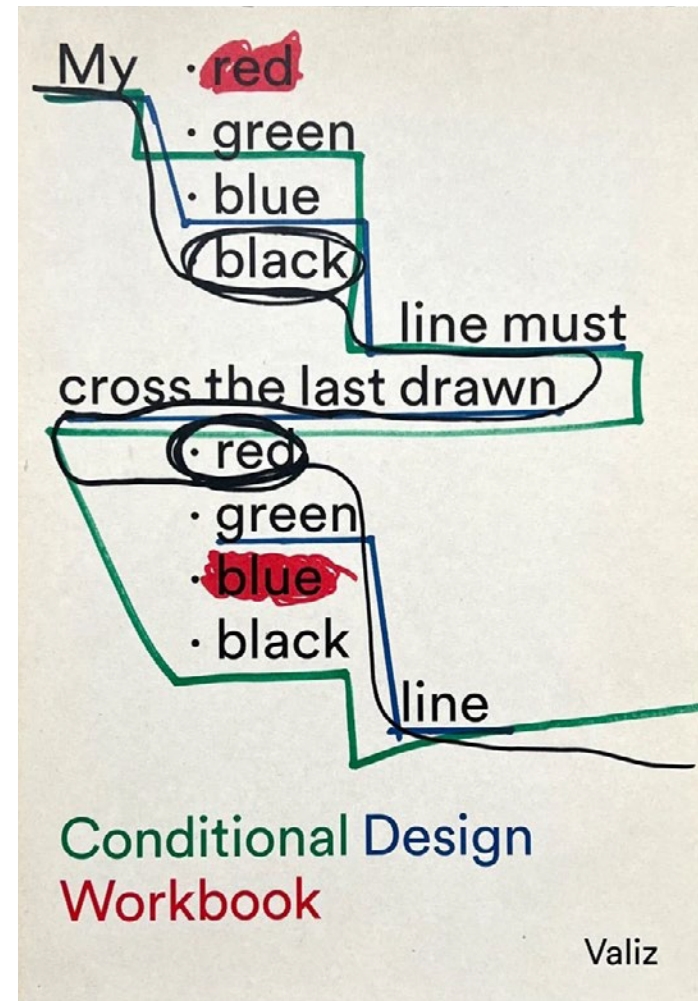
Position through Contextualising - Written Component - Text (4), Work (1)



Johanna Drucker *The Visible Word* (2020)

"Introduction", "Semiotics, Materiality, and Typographic Practice"

In *The Visible Word*, Johanna Drucker reexamines the semiotic understanding of language and writing, arguing that typography occupies a space between the verbal and the visual that resists conventional classification. Traditional linguistics, particularly in Saussure's model, treats writing as a secondary representation of speech, grounding language in the phonological system and rendering writing as a transparent medium. Rather than simply rejecting this view, Drucker shifts the focus to the visual form of writing and introduces the concept of materiality, emphasizing that formal conditions such as type, layout, and medium actively participate in the production of meaning. Typography, therefore, is not merely a tool for representing language, but a system that operates through form and contributes to meaning-making.



Conditional Design Workbook

Contributors: Andrew Blauvelt, Koert van Mensvoort, Conditional Design Team
Design: Julia Born, assisted by Nina Paim

Conditional design proposes that the process is the product — that logic, not form, is the primary tool, and that input drawn from the external environment activates and shapes that process.

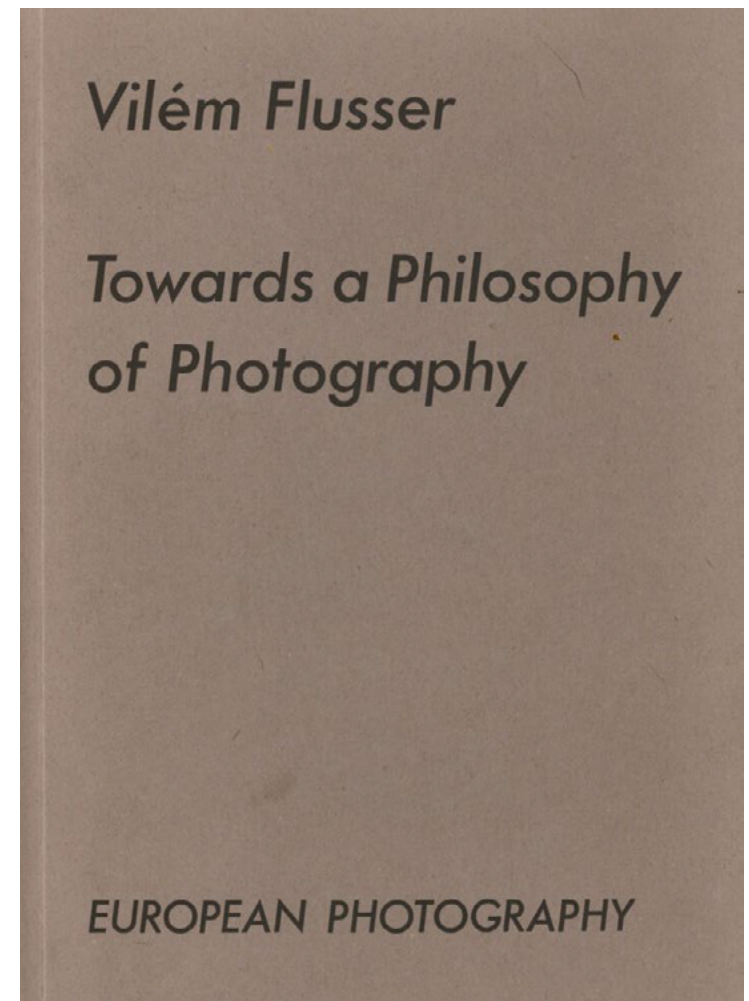
In this project, the image functions as input: it does not determine the final form of the text, but sets the conditions under which the text takes shape. The typographic shifts in size, slant, and spacing are the residue of this process — the visible trace of a logic at work. What emerges is neither purely linguistic nor purely visual, but a reading experience that sits between the two: a narrative that is felt through the pattern of change rather than decoded through meaning alone. The conditions do not illustrate the image; they carry its influence into language as a structured, intelligible difference.



Steyerl, H. (2012) *In Defense of the Poor Image*

Contributors: Andrew Blauvelt, Koert van Mensvoort, Conditional Design Team
Design: Julia Born, assisted by Nina Paim

Steyerl's argument that the poor image reduces visual content to data, a condition rather than a visual reality, directly reframes how I understand my own system. Like the poor image, which is stripped of its visual integrity through compression and circulation, my use of image sampling treats the image not as a coherent visual object but as a source of extractable conditions: brightness, movement, colour values. Both operations share the same logic, isolating one layer of the image and using it to drive something else. Steyerl's framework makes explicit what my system assumes: that an image can be productive precisely when it is reduced to its most minimal, data-like state. This shifts my understanding of what the image sampler is doing. It is not capturing the image, but extracting its conditions, and letting those conditions act upon language from within.

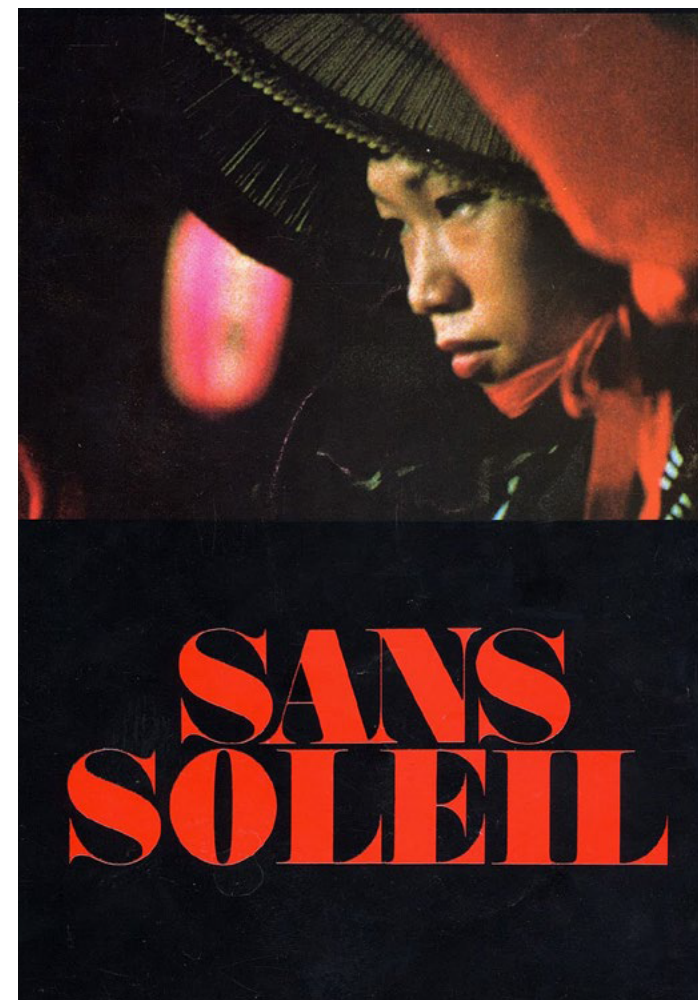


Vilém Flusser *Towards a Philosophy of Photography* (1983)

"The Apparatus"

Flusser distinguishes the apparatus from tools and machines: tools and machines perform material operations — reshaping matter, producing functional objects. The apparatus is symbolic: its purpose is to change how the world is made meaningful.

In this project, the image functions as a condition. The changes it imposes on the text which in size, slant, spacing are not made to improve readability or serve any functional purpose. Instead, they alter the text at the level of meaning. The materiality of the letterform becomes a site where another layer of narrative resides — one that is felt rather than read, perceived through the logic of change itself.



Chris Marker *Sans Soleil* (1983)

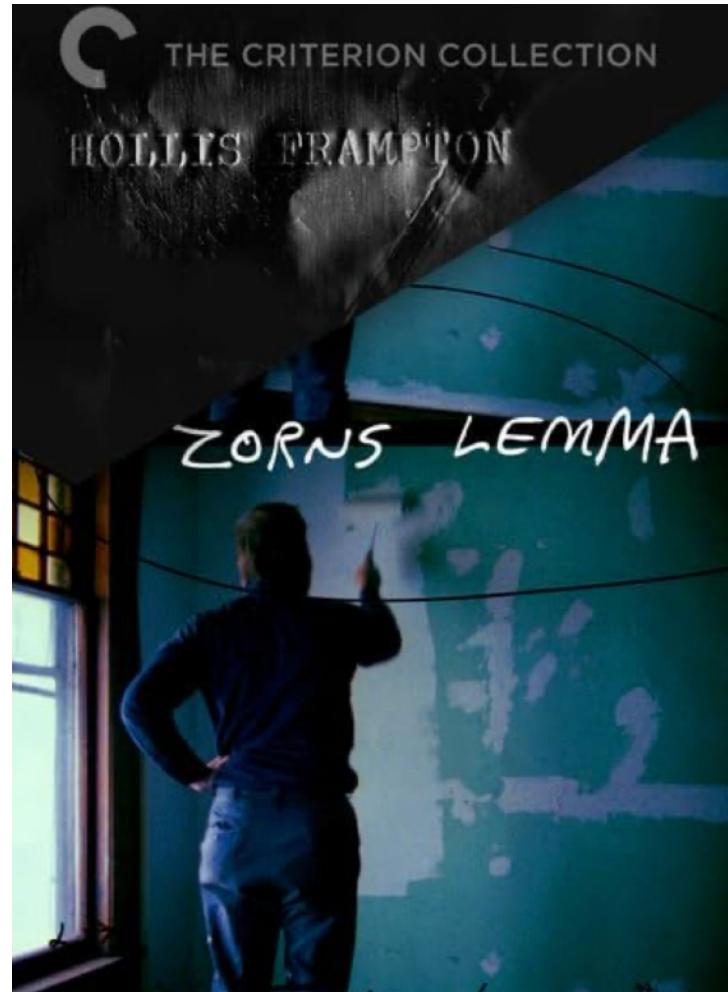
<https://vimeo.com/328606733?fl=pl&fe=sh>

Using *Sans Soleil* as a primary source, the significance lies not in its visual content but in the unstable relationship between image and language. As an essay film, it resists linear narrative and constructs meaning through both disjunction and alignment between voice-over and image. The narration does not simply anchor the image; it simultaneously displaces and rewrites it, destabilizing any fixed interpretation. This condition directly informs my project. Through audio description, I translate moving images into language, while allowing the original image data to act back upon the text, transforming its visual behavior. Language thus operates both as an anchoring device and as a mechanism of deviation. Furthermore, the coexistence of image, original narration, and audio description produces a layered structure, within which meaning is no longer singular but continuously negotiated. This structure offers a critical entry point for examining how language intervenes in, reshapes, and reconditions the perception of moving images.

- Reference. Text.
1. Barthes, R. (1977) 'Rhetoric of the Image', in *Image Music Text*. London: Fontana Press, pp. 32–51.
 2. Drucker, J. (2020) 'Introduction' and 'Semiotics, Materiality, and Typographic Practice', in *The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art, 1909–1923*.
 3. Lust, M. et al. (eds.) (2020) *Conditional Design Workbook*. Amsterdam: Valiz.
 4. Flusser, V. (1983) 'The Apparatus', in *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*. London: Reaktion Books.
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- Works.
1. Banner, F. (1997) *The Nam* [Artist's book].
 2. Frampton, H. (1970) *Zorns Lemma* [Film]. USA.
 3. Niu, Jun Qiang (2020) *Reveal* [Video installation].
 4. Palmer, Ollie (2016) *24fps Psycho* [Video / digital work].
 5. Marker, C. (1983) *Sans Soleil* [Film]. France.
 4. Hito Steyerl (2013) *How Not to be Seen. A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File* [Video / digital work]
 5. Gordon, D. (1993) *24 Hour Psycho* [Video installation]. London: Hayward Gallery.

Position through Contextualising - Written Component - Works (5)



Frampton, H. (1970) Zorns Lemma

This structural film begins with the alphabet, then systematically replaces each letter with a film clip until language disappears entirely and only image remains. The rule is completely transparent — the viewer can track the logic of substitution and directly experience language being displaced by image, step by step.

Two aspects of this work are directly relevant to my project. First, the transparency of the rule: because the substitution logic is legible, the viewer does not simply observe an effect but understands the mechanism producing it. This challenged me to ensure that my own system's logic remains perceptible — that the relationship between image conditions and typographic transformation can be felt, not just seen. Second, the direction of displacement: in Zorns Lemma, image systematically replaces language. My project inverts this movement. Rather than image consuming language, image conditions enter language and alter its form from within. Language is not replaced — it persists, but it is no longer the same. What remains is a text that carries the conditions of the image inside itself.



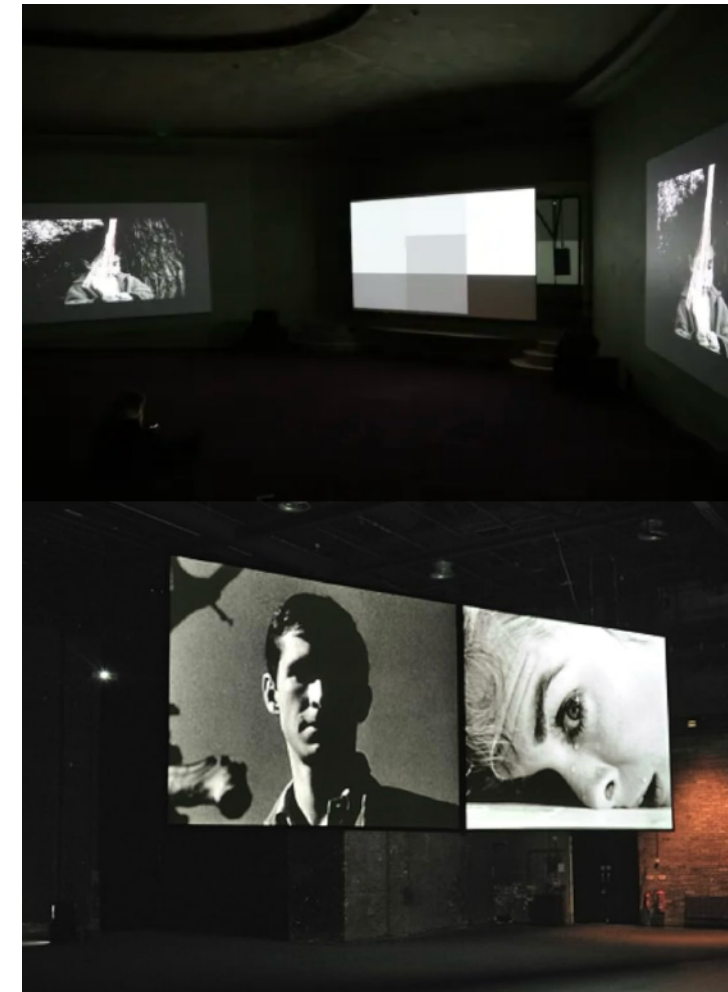
Hito Steyerl — How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File (2013)

Steyerl uses video as a medium to examine the conditionality of visibility in the digital age. In this work, visibility is not a matter of physical presence or absence, but is determined by resolution, pixels, and the logic of surveillance devices, whether something can be seen depends on whether it meets the recognition conditions of a given system.

This work prompted me to reconsider the nature of reading within my own system. Within Steyerl's framework, visibility is allocated by conditions rather than assumed as a default state.

This directly corresponds to my project: when audio description text is driven by image conditions, readability is no longer the primary function of language but becomes a secondary outcome.

Whether the text can be read depends on the conditions it inhabits, not on its nature as language. In this sense, language becomes an interface for receiving conditions, both seeing and reading are no longer active acts, but states determined by external forces.



Ollie Palmer — 24fps Psycho (2016) & Douglas Gordon — 24 Hour Psycho (1993)

Both works appropriate Hitchcock's Psycho, one of the most widely recognised films in cinema history. This choice is not incidental. By operating on a film that already exists within collective visual memory, both artists ensure that the viewer brings prior knowledge and emotional association to the encounter. The transformation they perform is measured against what the viewer already knows.

In 24fps Psycho, Palmer analyses each frame of the film using software, replacing footage with visually matching archival material driven by the film's audio volume. The result is a systematic de-emotionalisation of an inherently sensory and visceral source: a horror film reduced to data, its fear converted into parameters. The emotional intensity of the original is not preserved but extracted and replaced by the cold logic of algorithmic matching. What remains is the rhythm of the film, now treated as pure data, stripped of form and feeling.

In 24 Hour Psycho, Gordon slows the same film to last exactly twenty-four hours. The form and sequence of the original are preserved, but the temporal rhythm is stretched beyond recognition. The emotional arc of the film, its tension and release, is extended to a point where the viewer can no longer perceive it as sensation. Emotion is not removed but rendered imperceptible through duration.

Together, these two works clarify what my project is doing by contrast. Palmer preserves rhythm and removes form and emotion. Gordon preserves form and removes rhythm and emotion. My project preserves rhythm, the only element that transfers directly from image conditions into typographic form, while transforming everything else into the conditions of language.



Niu Jun Qiang *Reveal* (2020)

<https://vimeo.com/494015013?fl=pl&fe=sh>

Niu Jun Qiang's *Reveal* transforms audio description into light and breath, exposing the potential of audio description as an intermediary material. As the least interventionist form of language applied to images, audio description occupies a space between image and language in an ostensibly neutral and transparent manner. This sense of "neutrality" resonates with the premise of my first creative stage: that a blank surface is neutral. Yet just as blankness is never truly neutral, the transparency of audio description is itself a construction — every descriptive choice is already an act of intervention. It is precisely this paradox that makes audio description the central carrier of image traces in my work.

Of all the qualities the image carries, what *Reveal* preserves is its rhythm — not the visual rhythm of the image directly, but the rhythm of language responding to the image's content, recorded through the physical vibration of the performer's voice in the candlelight. The preservation is analogue and bodily: rhythm passes through language, through breath, and into light.

This differs from my own system, where rhythm is preserved digitally and parametrically — the brightness conditions of the image drive typographic parameters directly, translating the image's rhythm into the behaviour of text. Both works use audio description as the intermediary, and both preserve rhythm as the core surviving quality. But where *Reveal* captures rhythm through the body, my system captures it through data.

Reference. Text. 1. Barthes, R. (1977) 'Rhetoric of the Image', in *Image Music Text*. London: Fontana Press, pp. 32–51. 2. Drucker, J. (2020) 'Introduction' and 'Semiotics, Materiality, and Typographic Practice', in *The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art, 1909–1923*. 3. Lust, M. et al. (eds.) (2020) *Conditional Design Workbook*. Amsterdam: Valiz. 4. Flusser, V. (1983) 'The Apparatus', in *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*. London: Reaktion Books. 5. Steyerl, H. (2012) 'In Defense of the Poor Image', in *The Wretched of the Screen*. Berlin: Sternberg Press, pp. 31–45.

Works. 1. Banner, F. (1997) *The Nam* [Artist's book]. 2. Frampton, H. (1970) *Zorns Lemma* [Film]. USA. 3. Niu, Jun Qiang (2020) *Reveal* [Video installation]. 4. Palmer, Ollie (2016) *24fps Psycho* [Video / digital work]. 5. Marker, C. (1983) *Sans Soleil* [Film]. France. 6. Hito Steyerl (2013) *How Not to be Seen. A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File* [Video / digital work]. 7. Gordon, D. (1993) *24 Hour Psycho* [Video installation]. London: Hayward Gallery.