

Broken transitions

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Used fonts : Roboto, Roboto Serif

*Vol. II : Serendipitous Reuses
and Repurposed Glitches*

Broken transitions

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and Repurposed Glitches*

Synopsis

Perfection is a myth and reality is messy. A perfectionist approach to design is therefore difficult, not to say impossible or unattainable. However, the digital and human errors inherent in the design process can open up unexpected perspectives. With this in mind, *Broken Transitions* is a trilogy of editorial artifacts that explores the creative potential of error. Based on the concept of transduction between media (between digital and physical formats), the project highlights how errors, often seen as anomalies to be corrected, can become poetic elements or engines of meaning and expression.

This editorial project is developed around three printed objects, which address different categories of error: *unintended*, unintentional errors, resulting from technical, human or material limitations; *reclaimed* or recovered errors, discovered by chance and deliberately preserved; *provoked* errors, resulting from deliberate sabotage or misuse of technology.

Each volume has its own graphic identity, shaped by its particular relationship with a typology of error, combining slants, misalignments, flaws, overlapping pages and experiments in typographic manipulation. Ultimately, the project questions the pursuit of perfection in design processes, inviting us to see errors and anomalies as creative opportunities.

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Unknown. (2013). You're not a real hipster until you take your typewriter to the park.



Unknown. (2013). You're not a real hipster until you take your typewriter to the park.

YOU'RE NOT A REAL HIPSTER

**UNTIL YOU TAKE YOUR
TYPEWRITER TO THE PARK**

1.From glitch to aesthetic



8

9

Understanding errors
in the postdigital

1.1. The New Aesthetic and the aesthetics of failure

10

Andersen, C. U. & Pold, S. B. (2015). Aesthetics of the Banal –
'New Aesthetics' in an Era of Divergent Digital Revolutions.

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What is 'new aesthetics'? James Bridle, who first introduced the term 'new aesthetic', provides a number of examples of associated cultural practices and phenomena on his Tumblr blog. Through the images of how pixels are used in the design of T-shirts, of 3D prints that visualize how Microsoft Kinect sees a player, and satellite photos of agricultural fields appearing as mosaics, the examples point to the side effects of technology. Such cultural practices and phenomena are often brought about by cheap gadgets and services, and produce a new and positive sense of beauty, almost at the fringe of kitsch and banality."

1.1. The New Aesthetic and the aesthetics of failure

The Internet of Things is a nuanced category that has evolved through different stages over more than a decade. Within the larger context of the New Aesthetic, it refers to the connection between devices and data streams, to objects with embedded digital technologies that can be managed and inventoried by software. The Internet of Things is infiltrated by the internet yet embodied and 'humanized', reversing the process of the digitization of physical material by embedding the virtual in materiality. [...] A predecessor to this virtually driven materiality is the early work of Vladimir Bonacic, [...] his dynamic objects, such as GF E16.4 CNSM, are real-world physical 'pixelated' structures that generate symmetrical patterns. [...] Bonacic once remarked that the computer must not simply remain a tool for simulation, but gives us a new substance and uncovers a new world before our eyes. In many ways this pioneering work pre-dates the projects currently labelled 'post-internet' – works that are deeply informed by the internet and digital processes yet take the form of physical objects. [...] Today's New Aesthetic images and objects are part of a larger historical trajectory, one that has a storied tradition yet was often neglected and existed on the periphery of artistic practice or technological innovation. Interestingly, this trajectory also gave the art more potential for growth due to the lack of pressures from either the art world or the sciences with regard to the innovations happening within the contexts of both these worlds."

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Paul, C., & Levy, M. (2015).
Genealogies of the New Aesthetic.

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Miyazaki, S. (2015). *Going Beyond the Visible:
New Aesthetic as an Aesthetic of Elitism?*

"In this respect, Minecraft shares characteristics with yet another permutation of the postdigital, the so-called 'new aesthetic'. This aesthetic, first identified by British designer James Bridle, includes pixels, glitches, errors and computer-augmented vision. Originally Pitched as a highly-curated batch of crowdsourced visual and textual content on the commercial microblogging and social networking platform Tumblr, the New Aesthetic was presented as a 'shareable concept'. The new aesthetic seeks to capture the 'condition of computability' by appropriating existing content. This drive is congruent with that of glitch art, and to a lesser extent the communities of Minecraft, who, in the process of building and shaping their community, produce paratexts that unintentionally reflect the conditions of computability associated with the glitch aesthetic. Key to Bridle's original conception of the 'new aesthetic' was its mode of curation: the Tumblr. It was 'driven by collective emailing, tweeting, posting and commenting', making it an exemplar of network culture artistic movements."



Lorusso, S. & Schmieg, S. (2012).
56 Broken Kindle Screens.



Lorusso, S. & Schmieg, S. (2012).
56 Broken Kindle Screens.

1.2. Hybridity

and the postdigital noise

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Berry, D. M. & Dieter, M. (Eds.). (2015). *Thinking Postdigital/Aesthetics: Art, Computation and Design*.

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“The ‘postdigital’, meanwhile, also covers a wide range of issues attached to the entanglements of media life after the digital, including a shift from an earlier moment driven by an almost obsessive fascination and enthusiasm with new media to a broader set of affectations that now includes unease, fatigue, boredom and disillusionment. Linked to ideas like the ‘off-internet’ and ‘neo-analogue’, the postdigital recognizes the revival of ‘old’ media formats like cassette tapes or analogue synthesizers, and more generally maps out ‘the messy state of media, arts and design after their digitization’.”

1.2. Hybridity and the postdigital noise

"DIGITAL' = STERILE HIGH TECH?

The simplest definition of 'post-digital' describes a media aesthetics which opposes such digital high-tech and high-fidelity cleanness. The term was coined in 2000 by the musician Kim Cascone, in the context of glitch aesthetics in contemporary electronic music. Also in 2000, the Australian sound and media artist Ian Andrews used the term more broadly as part of a concept of "post-digital aesthetics" which rejected the "idea of digital progress" as well as "a teleological movement toward 'perfect' representation". Cascone and Andrews considered the notion of 'post-digital' primarily as an antidote to techno-Hegelianism. The underlying context for both their papers was a culture of audio-visual production in which 'digital' had long been synonymous with 'progress [...] In rejecting this narrative, Cascone and Andrews opposed the paradigm of technical quality altogether. Ironically, the use of the term 'postdigital' was somewhat confusing in the context of Cascone's paper, since the glitch music defined and advocated here actually was digital, and even based on specifically digital sound-processing artefacts. On the other hand, and in the same sense as postpunk can be seen as a reaction to punk, Cascone's concept of 'post-digital' may best be understood as a reaction to an age in which even camera tripods are being labelled as 'digital', in an effort to market them as new and superior technology."

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Cramer, F. (2014).
What Is 'Post-Digital'?

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Berry, D. M., & Dieter, M. (Eds.). (2015). *Thinking
Postdigital Aesthetics: Art, Computation and Design.*

"Crucially, this also involves working through the implementations of the computal in a regular state of constant upheaval. In other words, this is a condition in which digital disruption is not transcended as such, but becomes routine or business as usual. All of these proposed terms and concepts seize on a hybridized approach towards the digital and non-digital, finding characteristics of one within the other, deliberately mixing up processes of making things discrete, calculable, indexed and automated in unorthodox ways. In doing so, they form part of an epistemological asterism of practices, experiences and mediations that follows the primacy of the computal as normative. That is, the appearance of these terms can be interpreted collectively as endeavours to elucidate the trajectories of ubiquitous digitalization; they collectively form new patterns which can help us begin to map and historicize the varieties of computal societies."



Wilson, A. N. (2012).
ScanOps.



Wilson, A. N. (2012).
ScanOps.



Wilson, A. N. (2012).
ScanOps.

2. Transduction failures

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Breakdown
and expression

2.1. Transduction

as artistic method

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Berry, D. M. (2015).
The Postdigital Constellation.

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“The postdigital, as an aesthetic, gestures towards a relation produced by digital surfaces in a bewildering number of different places and contexts. This interface-centricity is not necessarily screenic, however, and represents the current emerging asterism that is formed around notions of art, computation and design. In this conception, the postdigital is not purely a digital formation or artefact – it can also be the concepts, networks and frameworks of digitality that are represented. Nonetheless, the interesting aspect is the implicit notion of surfaces as theatres of action and performance – such as through data visualization, interactivity or material design – above and beyond a depth model, which highlights the machinery of computation.”

2.1. Transduction

as artistic method

"Many possibilities emerge from the combination of digital and print, especially when networks become involved (and therefore infinite supplies of content that can be reprogrammed or recontextualized at will). A number of different strategies have been employed to assemble information harvested online in an acceptable form for use in a plausible print publication. One of the most popular of these renders large quantities of Twitter posts (usually spanning a few years) into fictitious diaries. *My Life in Tweets* by James Bridle is an early example realised in 2009. The book compiled all of the author's posts over a two-year period, forming a sort of intimate travelogue. The immediacy of tweeting is recorded in a very classic graphical layout, as if the events were annotated in a diary. Furthermore, various online services have started to sell services appealing to the vanity of Twitter micro-bloggers, for example *Bookapp's Tweetbook* (book-printing your tweets) or *Tweetghetto* (a poster version). Another very popular 'web sampling' strategy focuses on collecting amateur photographs with or without curatorial criteria. Here we have an arbitrary narrative, employing a specific aesthetic in order to create a visual unity that is universally recognisable due to the ubiquitousness of online life in general, and especially the continuous and unstoppable uploading of personal pictures to Facebook. A specific sub-genre makes use of pictures from Google Street View, reinforcing the feeling that the picture is real and has been reproduced with no retouches, while also reflecting on the accidental nature of the picture itself. Michael Wolf's book *a series of unfortunate events*, points to our very evident and irresistible fascination with 'objets trouvés', a desire that can be instantly and repeatedly

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Ludovico, A. (2014). *Post-digital Publishing, Hybrid and Processual Objects in Print*.

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Ludovico, A. (2014). *Post-digital Publishing, Hybrid and Processual Objects in Print*.

gratified online. Finally, there's also the illusion of instant-curation of a subject, which climaxes in the realisation of a printed object. Looking at seemingly endless pictures in quick succession online can completely mislead us about their real value. Once a picture is fixed in the space and time of a printed page, our judgments can often be very different. Such forms of 'accidental art' obtained from a 'big data' paradigm, can lead to instant artist publications such as -- *A Novel*, which is a long sequence of insignificant captcha texts, crowd-sourced and presented as an inexplicable novel in an alien language. There are traces of all the above examples in Kenneth Goldsmith's performance *Printing Out The Internet*. Goldsmith invited people to print out whatever part of the web they desired and bring it to the gallery LABOR art space in Mexico City, where it was exhibited for a month (which incidentally also generated a number of naive responses from environmentally concerned people). The work was inspired by Aaron Swartz and his brave and dangerous liberation of copyrighted scientific content from the JSTOR online archive. It is what artist Paul Soulellis calls "publishing performing the Internet". Having said all this, the examples mentioned above are yet to challenge the paradigm of publishing – maybe the opposite. What they are enabling is a 'transduction' between two media. They take a sequential, or reductive part of the web and mould it into traditional publishing guidelines. They tend to compensate for the feeling of being powerless over the elusive and monstrous amount of information available online (at our fingertips), which we cannot comprehensively visualise in our mind."



Wolf, M. (2010).
A Series of Unfortunate Events.



Wolf, M. (2010).
A Series of Unfortunate Events.



Wolf, M. (2010).
A Series of Unfortunate Events.

2.2. Low resolution,

high meaning

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Steyed, H (2013).
In Defense of the Poor Image.

“It transforms quality into accessibility,
exhibition value into cult value, into
films into clips, conte is liberated and
distracts of cinema and archy, at the
the vaults of digital substruction: it is a
thrust into its own abstraction.”
expense tends toward becoming.
image tends in its very
visual idea in

2.2. Low resolution, high meaning

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"The glitches which are found in Minecraft are filtered through the community of players and Persson and his colleagues at Mojang in a manner that has parallels with the process of curating. In this context, curating includes not just the practices of the people who produce collections at galleries or museums, but also the everyday curatorial practices of sorting and sharing content on social media, and even media production. Commentators have already linked glitch art practices with the 'Pop Art' movement, through their mutual interest in the 'mistake' and 'popular culture'. But there is also a strong link between glitch art and the more curatorial art practices of the 'found art' or the 'readymade' movements. Goriunova and Shulgin (2008, 115) note the strange similarity between contemporary glitch art and avant-garde art. However, where glitch art differs from these previous movements is in its concern with the emergent characteristics of popular digital media, and using what would often simply be understood as mistakes, to explore the postdigital potential for popular media. How glitches are shared and celebrated in Minecraft illustrates how the curatorial element crucial for understanding the role that glitches have in the game and among the game community."

Miyazaki, S. (2015). *Going Beyond the Visible: New Aesthetic as an Aesthetic of Blindness?*

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"Glitch aesthetics, corruption artefacts, retro 8-bit graphics. The terms 'glitch' and 'corruption artefacts' in the broadest sense refer to images and objects that have been tampered with; their creation relates to the core of the media apparatuses used to store, produce and relay information. These corrupted images can be created by adjusting or manipulating the normal physical or virtual composition of the machine or software itself, or by using machines or digital tools in methods different from their normative modalities. From the 1960s onwards, early glitch material or artefacts were created in both video and sound art. Video artists such as Nam June Paik, Woodie and Steina Vasulka, Vito Acconci and Jacques Guyonnet were creating glitches within their video work, and informed contemporary practitioners such as Rosa Menkman. At the same time, artists such as John Cage, Phil Morton and Dan Sandin created sound and visual syntheses through their experimentation with traditional and modern outboard equipment such as modular synthesizers. The framework, processes and output of this practice forever shifted the landscape of electronic aesthetics."

Paul, C., & Levy, M. (2015). *Genealogies of the New Aesthetic*.



Kessels, E. (2012).
In Almost Every Picture #11.



Kessels, E. (2012).
In Almost Every Picture.



Kessels, E. (2012).
In Almost Every Picture.

3.Reclaiming the flawed

36

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Errors as
creative tools

3.1. From bugs

to game features

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Appelley, T. (2015). *Glitch Sorting :
Minecraft, Curation and the Postdigital.*

39

“Videogame-based art has an established tradition of celebrating the glitch and pixelated aesthetics. Well, not so much celebrating, rather wallowing in what state, tradition aesthetics allow ‘messy state’, pixelated aesthetics as the ‘messy state’, pixelated aesthetics as the ‘messy state’, pixelated aesthetics as the ‘messy state’.”
David Berry after the postdigital might of the digital illustrates the sticklers.”
Minecraft, even though videogame art.
Aesthetic, it as videogame art.
not classify

3.1. From bugs to game features

"After going through alpha and beta phases, Minecraft was released in November 2011. This did not mean that the game was complete. Mojang continued to add improvements to its mechanics and to add new subtleties to the world-generating algorithm and the various items that could be crafted and constructed from the materials found in the world. Consequently, upgrades were released with some regularity in subsequent years, further increased by the versions developed for individual platforms. These ongoing upgrades, and the close lines of communications between Mojang and players, meant that the community of players had a substantial impact on the iterative design of the game by drawing Persson's attention to various flaws or glitches in the programming of the world. Through this process some glitches were eliminated, while others were celebrated and incorporated into the cultures and play of the game. In some cases, game elements that emerged as glitches were reprogrammed into the game as official game elements. One example is the notorious, yet iconic, Creeper – an enemy 'mob' in the specialized vocabulary of Minecraft – which had its origins in a glitch. This coding error was originally an attempt to introduce a pig into the game, but the dimensions of the figure were entered incorrectly. Persson developed the Creeper based on the weird 'creepy' look of the malformed pig. In this way, part of the historic development of the game and its community is a process of sorting through glitches and eliminating some while celebrating others. In the next section, this process of collecting and classifying glitches in the community and iterative design of Minecraft is connected to contemporary post-digital art practices."

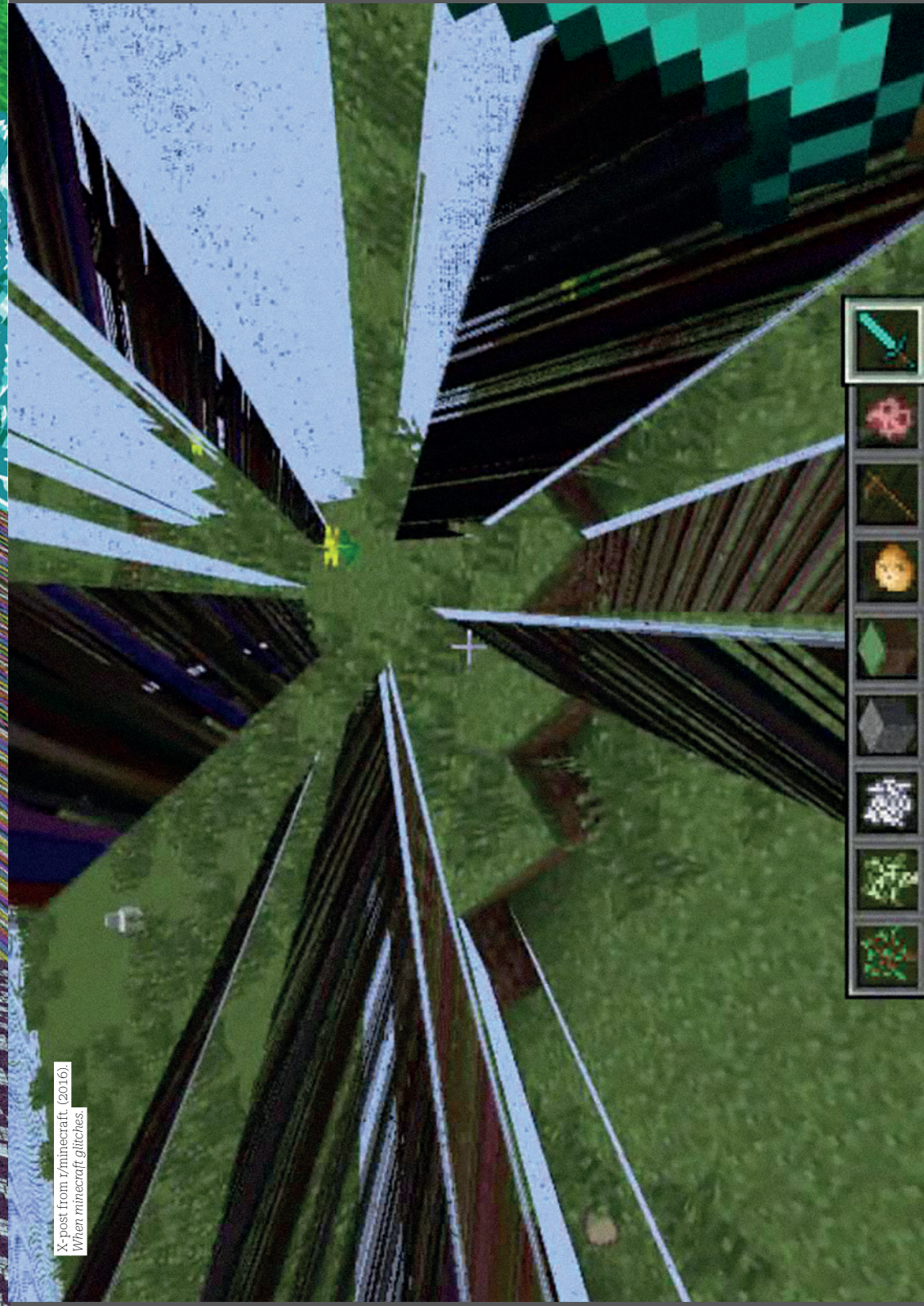
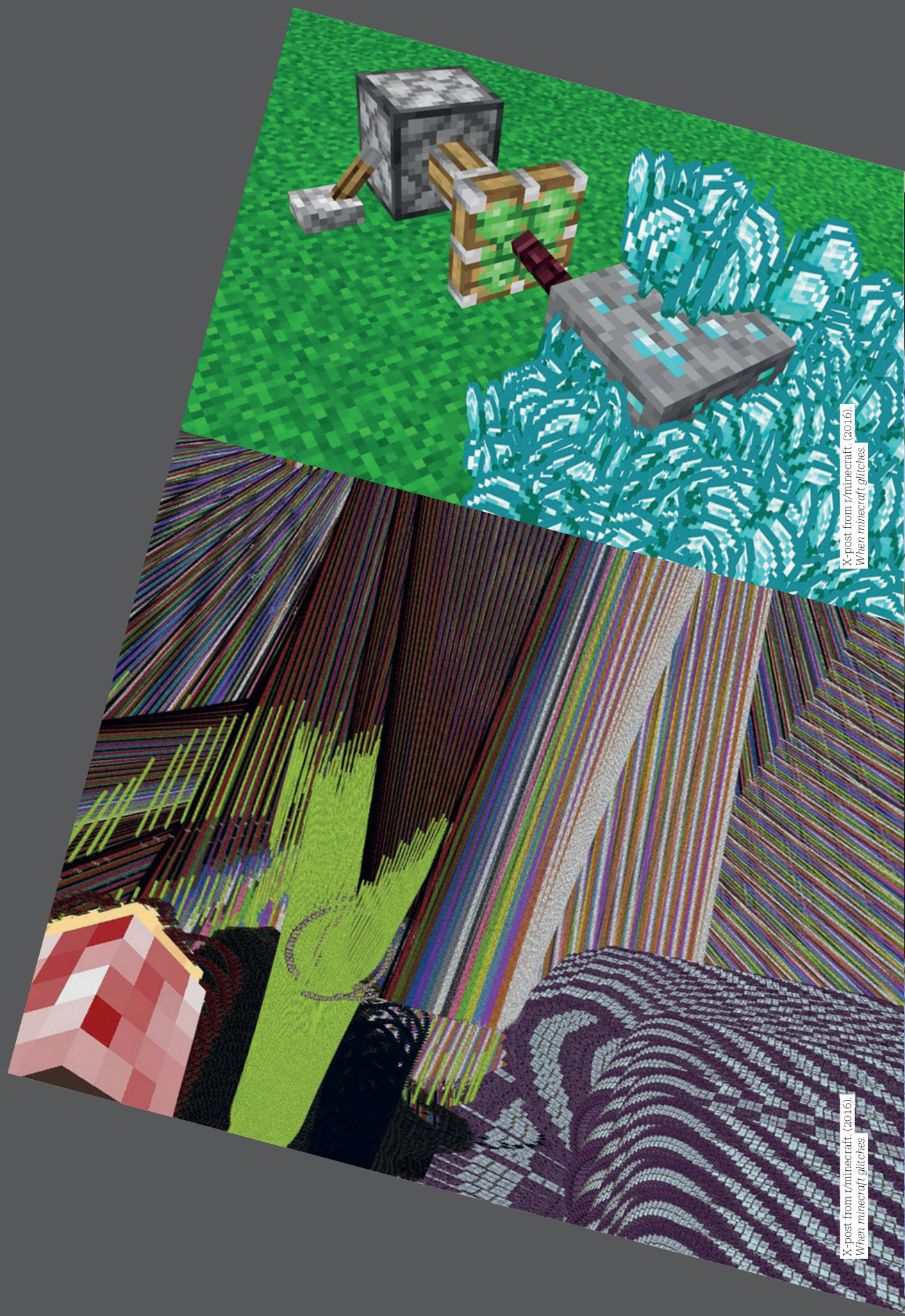
40

Apperley, T. (2015). *Glitch Sorting :
Minecraft, Curation and the Postdigital.*

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"Post-internet is the bastard child of net.art and contemporary art/ Post-internet practices are characterized by hybridity and hyper-mediation of existing genres, platform-oriented activity, slippage between formal output of digital and physical environments, and tactical web surfing. If social capital comes from the practice of taste making (compiling images instead of making them), artists who have been called 'post-internet artists' can be considered alchemists. They take stock of the rubbish heap of net history. They turn shit into gold by compressing and decompressing digital artefacts, rehashing them into something informative, intellectually abstract, and visually elegant. Regressive is progressive. It's easier to play the old game than revolt without the resources or reality that will allow you to resist. Commodification of art and everything surrounding it is the rule, not the exception. Initiative is both self-interested and ideological. Write or curate to leverage a new hierarchy in which you yourself can have a place, or something like that. Everything has been done; you can only do it better. Everything is a remix."

Chan, J. (2014).
Notes on Post-Internet.



3.2. Nostalgia, kitsch, and the beauty of the imperfect

44

Steyerl, H. (2013).
In Defense of the Poor Image.

45

“The cult of film gauge dominated even independent film production. The rich image established its own set of hierarchies, with new technologies offering more and more possibilities to creatively degrade it.”

3.2. Nostalgia, kitsch, and the beauty of the imperfect

"Later writers on glitch art endorse the connection between exposing failures in technology and the discovery of new techniques, originally mapped by Cascone. The aestheticization of the glitch as a failure of the digital is symptomatic, not only in game art but across contemporary art practice. Glitch artist Rosa Menkman defines 'glitch' as 'an unexpected occurrence, unintended result, or break or disruption in a system'. The glitch art movement includes 'a set of audio/ visual artistic practices which capture, exploit, and produce glitch artifacts'. Without recourse to this movement or discourse, Persson has developed a game which aestheticizes the glitch within the game. In Minecraft, glitches may be celebrated provided they do not impact overmuch on the course of the game, which means that some glitches are tolerated, while others are eliminated through iterative design. Even so, this 'sorting' of glitches into those which are harmless and fun and those which damage the experience of the game suggests that Minecraft has a peculiar relationship vis-à-vis the glitch aesthetic, which means that only particular kinds of glitches may be aestheticized. However, the 'glitch' in glitch art is often more of a metaphor than a technical reality. Menkman suggests that the glitch should not be automatically understood in a strict technical sense."

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Apperley, T. (2015). *Glitch Sorting: Minecraft, Curation and the Postdigital*.

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Cramer, F. (2014). *What Is Post-Digital?*

"POST-DIGITAL = RETRO? No doubt, there is a great deal of overlap between on one hand post-digital mimeograph printmaking, audio cassette production, mechanical typewriter experimentation and vinyl DJing, and on the other hand various hipster-retro media trends – including digital simulations of analog lo-fi in popular smartphone apps such as Instagram, Hipstamatic and iSupr8. But there is a qualitative difference between simply using superficial and stereotypical ready-made effects, and the thorough discipline and study required to make true 'vintage' media work, driven by a desire for non-formulaic aesthetics. Still, such practices can only be meaningfully called 'post-digital' when they do not merely revive older media technologies, but functionally repurpose them in relation to digital media technologies: zines that become anti-blogs or non-blogs, vinyl as anti-CD, cassette tapes as anti-MP3, analog film as anti-video."



Merikyan, R. (2010).
A Vernacular of File Formats.

Merikyan, R. (2010).
A Vernacular of File Formats.



Merikyan, R. (2010).
A Vernacular of File Formats.

4. Textual

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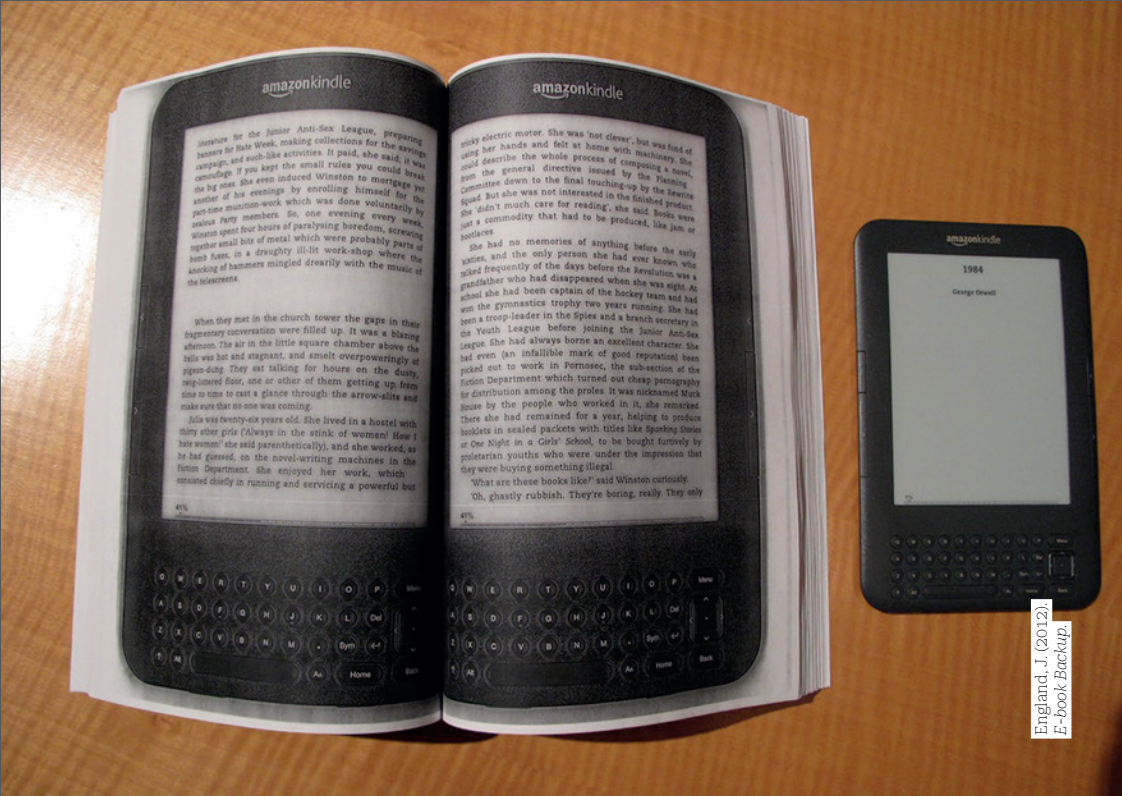
50

5. Image

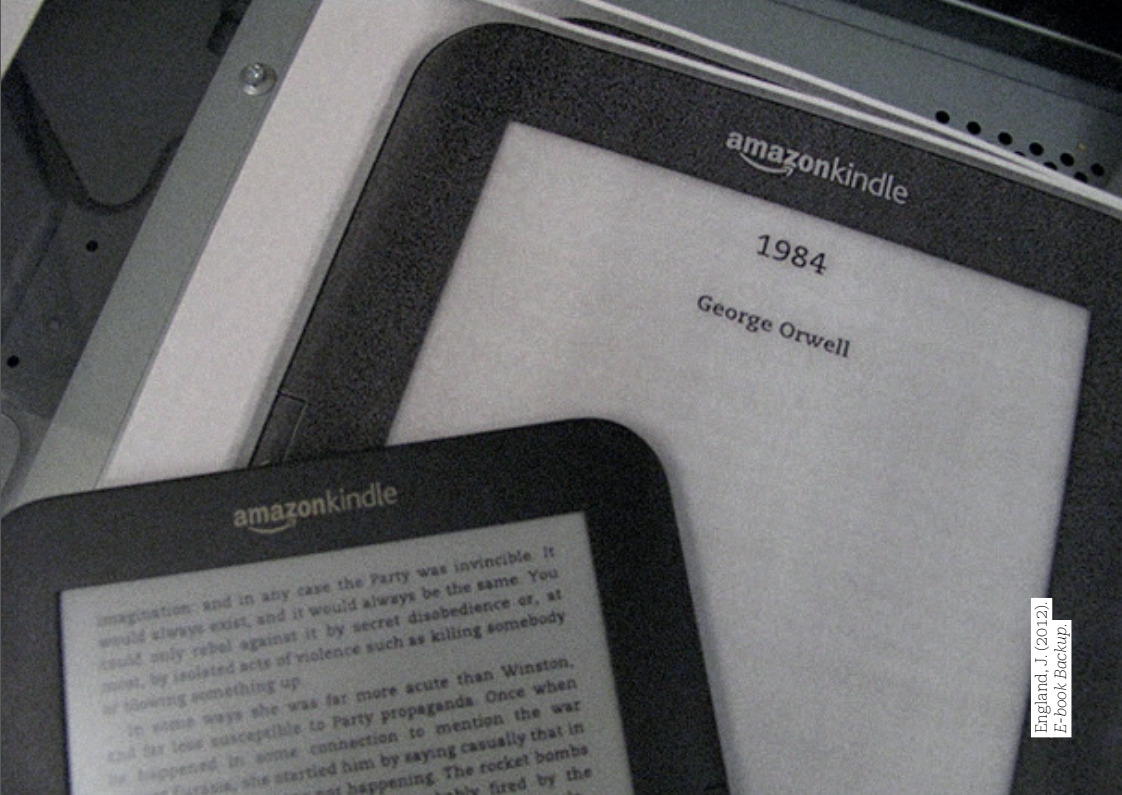
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