Statement

My research focuses on a very basic question: exploring digital image making based on epistemology. By using digital technology as a mode of revelation, I focus on the process of image making itself, and in particular, the means, tools and ends used to make images - what tools do we use to make digital images? How are they used? How do digital images relate to physical visual experiences? If we have a hundred different ways to produce the same content, what distinguishes them? Why choose one over the other?

My interest lies in the new characteristics of images brought by technology: vector graphics enable images to be infinitely scaled, code creates images based on language, 3D interprets each object as a surface, and photography flattens the real world into a plane. Therefore, my work typically revolves around some form of digital technology, including but not limited to layout design, photography, 3D modelling and coding. In my work, I don't focus too much on the content itself, but rather on the techniques and logic used to create it, and what that creation can bring to the table.

Reference

Heidegger, M. (1977) *The Question Concerning Technology*
Available at: https://www2.hawaii.edu/~freeman/courses/phil394/The%20Question%20Concerning%20Technology.pdf (Accessed: 22 April 2024).

Heidegger said, "Technology itself is a contrivance—in Latin, an instrumentum." For modern graphic designers, most of the time, our tools are the software technologies provided by Adobe. These new software bring about new modes of image making, which in turn affect our perception of images. For example, when we open Photoshop, there is always an initial white layer lying quietly at the bottom, and our task is to overlay various images on top of it; we would consider the grey and white grid to represent "transparency." For these technologies, I want to ask some very basic questions: Why create images by overlaying on white? Why does a grey and white grid represent transparency?

"Modern technology too is a means to an end. This is why the instrumental conception of technology conditions every attempt to bring man into the right relation to technology." What I want to do is something like reading the user manual for a newly purchased juicer for the first time after bringing it home. I want to read the manual carefully, see what this tool is made for, what it can do, how to do it, and how I will actually use this juicer: What is the difference between juicing one fruit and mixing several fruits? How many fruits can I put in at most? Can the juicer be used to make other drinks?

Gleiter, J. (2012). *Ornament Today: Digital Material Structural.*
Bolzano: Bozen-Bolzano University Press.

Joerg wrote in *Ornament Today*, "...from an epistemological point of view, the principal question is not what ornament is but how something becomes ornament." I believe a similar structure can describe what I aim to do: I seek to explore not what these digital images look like once completed, but rather how they are produced.

Such work is based on the technology of making, and I believe that technology-based practice should be propelled through multiple light, swift cases. This is because I need, and have to, maintain a subtle distance from technology, to ensure that I am not led astray by it. Therefore, I need to continuously create small cases for my research, or "dots," which will make something visible. "It says nothing, but shows something."

For example, if I need to develop a long line based on dots, these dots can consistently extend in a certain direction:

Alternatively, each previous point may always trigger the next point to move in a different direction, but when they are connected, they collectively reveal something significant.
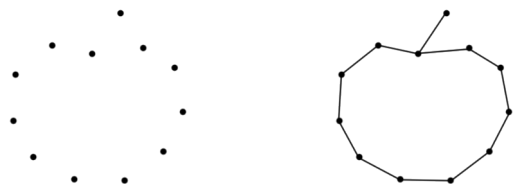
Goldsmith, K. (2011) *Uncreative Writing: Managing Language in the Digital Age.* New York: Columbia University Press.

The most inspiring part of this book is the author's use of clever examples. In Kenneth's narrative, digitization brings about new images: "You see a digital elevator button displaying a question mark instead of a number, ATMs in reboot mode, subway advertisement signs with 'out of memory' error messages, and flight arrival boards punctured by Windows desktops." It suggests to me that digitization not only brings new methods of image making but also new content—images that can only be presented by interfaces and should not appear in other traditional media, generated by new technologies. This leads me to contemplate (to their carrier mediums) what images are new and what images are old, which might also be a characteristic of the digital image worth exploring.

Ludovico, A. (2012) *Post-Digital Print: The Mutation of Publishing since 1894.* Eindhoven: Onomatopee.

I agree with the book's view on media, which evaluates printed material as "more than just a carrier for things to be shown on some display; it is also the display itself." Changes in media alter all aspects involved: content, experience, behaviour, and cultural customs. As a user of interfaces, I find it fascinating to experience the same content across different media. Some things are preserved, some are abandoned for updates, and some hover between the two, conflicting with our experiences with physical and digital media. For example, the act of flipping through physical books is preserved in e-books, but what we flip through is no longer pages but images.

The Great Pyramid of Giza Pie Chart. Available at: https://percentagecalculator.mes.fm/memes/the-great-pyramid-of-giza-pie-chart (Accessed: 19 April 2024).

In layout design, the negative space left by subtracting graphics from white builds the frame. When the frame comes before content, the layout process shifts from designing the frame for content to content for the frame.

The Pie Chart Pyramid is a perfect example of content matching form. This anonymous author transforms a table into an image by finding suitable graphics for the existing frame. What I was doing in the first week can be summarised as "making frames for images", in the second week I flipped it around and tried the logic of the pie chart pyramid: making images for frames - I made a poster with only the frame, devoid of content, as my tool, then started to make images happen in the frame as much as possible by manipulating the real world (not photoshop).

Sky

Sunny side of pyramid

Shady side of pyramid
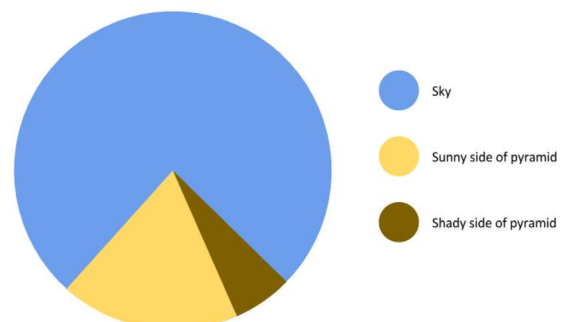
Magritte, R. (1929) *The Treachery of Images.* Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Treachery_of_Images (Accessed: 19 April 2024).

Magritte's work inspires me to think about the relationship between visual experience and images (text is also a type of image). The image of a pipe was first painted on the canvas, and then, the inserted text negated the content of the image, creating a conflict between image content and visual experience. This work questions the conventions of language and visual representation, which I believe relates to the "fundamental question" of digital image-making that I want to explore: going back to a part of the image that our experience takes for granted, such as the white layer at the bottom of a Photoshop file. I hope to, like this work, clearly and accurately find one or multiple visual means that can instil doubt in people about the nature of digital images.