...up by any infinite nu... ...ite numbers *a* and *b*, both g... However, if *b* were infinite, ..., $a + \infty = \infty$, and this seemed co... ...which the addition ...of a... two positi... ...sense that any i...nite number was th... ...and because this appea...d to violat... ...derstood to behave, infi...ite numbers ...con...istent. ...this kind of ...of infinite num...ent, however, on... ...e that infinite numbers must exhibit ...e numbers. M...over, by direct ap... Cantor ...ould demonstrate th... ...b...nite numbers

GOOD MEASURE

3/3

MARCH 2016
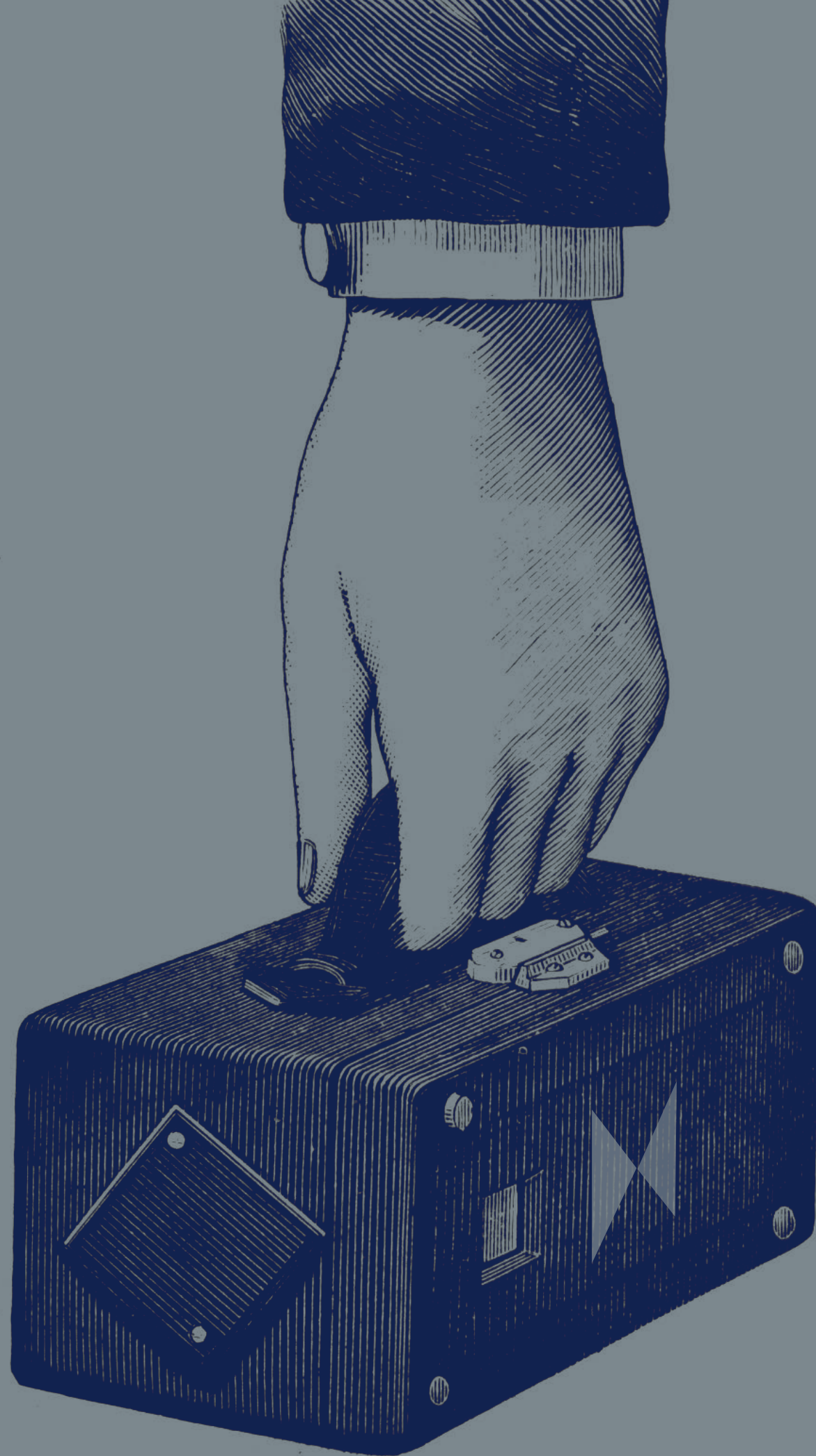
GOOD MEASURE ⅗

PRODUCTION

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On the Cover

BROWN U DIOP

I'm stuck
photograph
2016

Interested in contributng a cover?

We accept any medium, as long as it relates to our current theme,and submissions are accepted on an ongoing basis.

LICENSING

CONTENTS

PROLOGUE

IN DEFENSE OF HUMAN ERROR

It's time to talk about codes: Equally practical and meaningless, codes structure numerical and alphabetical symbols to make them legible. Once codified, these symbols are then used to make the world legible, establishing a series of reductive filters for the endlessness of sensation. So far, in our discussion of GOOD MEASURE, we've covered the translation of the real into data and the resulting systemic consequences of these material shifts. But not yet have we paid due attention to the processes that allow numerals to be read and interpreted, to be measured. Last month, we saw codes appear across bodies; however, there's a space between life becoming data, and data becoming lived (though often, and dangerously, imperceptible). The ease with which codes traverse immaterial and material spheres not only explains their prevalence, but also how seamlessly they have been integrated into the daily program. Rather than observing where measurement occurs, in this issue we look at how it can occur—namely, through the establishment of shared symbols. Modern society runs on symbolic value, and so to top off our thematic investigations into GOOD MEASURE, we offer four texts that play with symbol and code.

Sometimes symbols can be mixed up, confused and confusing. When presented with a perplexing arrangement of words or numbers, it can be easy to lose faith in the security they frequently provide. Here, the disruption (or discombobulation) of linguistic codes assists in mapping the cracks of language and speech, the slight gaps where meaning slips through.

Much like the movement of codes across materialities and dimensions, language tends to flood our senses, inconspicuously casting a semantic shadow over our surroundings. But if we can turn letters, words and phrases into empty containers, rendering them illegible, really cracking—in the sense of breaking, de-unifying—the code, we stand a chance at understanding those dark corners that support our interpretive gleanings.

Other times, symbols exceed their own coding system, being co-opted into chains of signification that ultimately defer the symbol from its intended use. The appropriation of mathematical symbols in particular raises questions about the supposed and self-imposed limits of number. Neatly categorized into types: natural, whole, rational, real, imaginary and so on, the potential for semantic drift is not immediately apparent in the realm of mathematics. But the moment a number gets re-coded to not only break outside its category, but also the discourse that founded, nurtured, and supports the category, the standard by which it gets evaluated changes. Like in alphabetical language, the symbolic value of numerical languages is not protected against the powerful sway of interpretive acts. We assume a lack of fluency explains the loss or absence of meaning in symbol, that someone somewhere holds the answer; but imagine our surprise upon realizing that the ability to read code only gets you so far. The rest might just have to remain immeasurable.

This should be good.

But good could be anything.

Should is a judgment,
which is really just a barrier.

Just   as in
    only,

but maybe also f   a   i   r   n   e   s   s.

Unbiased and evenhanded

seems inhuman and insensitive. Yet this is part of justice

—objective and correct.
I   p   r   i   l   and   d   t   c   e
 m   a   t   a   and   e   a   h   d   yet   "real",

objectivity

can't really exist.
Subjective is experience: s   b   p   and   d
        l   i   r   e
     a   a   e   w
      n   s   j   e   is knowledge and understanding.
      t   e   u   k
     e   d,   d   s   A picture is said to be worth a thousand words
        d,   i   A picture is said to be worth a thousand words
                              c   A picture is said to be worth a thousand words
                              e   A picture is said to be worth a thousand words
                              d,   A picture is said to be worth a thousand words
                                                    A picture is said to be worth a thousand words
                                                    A picture is said to be worth a thousand words,

but those words without the picture are up for interpretation.
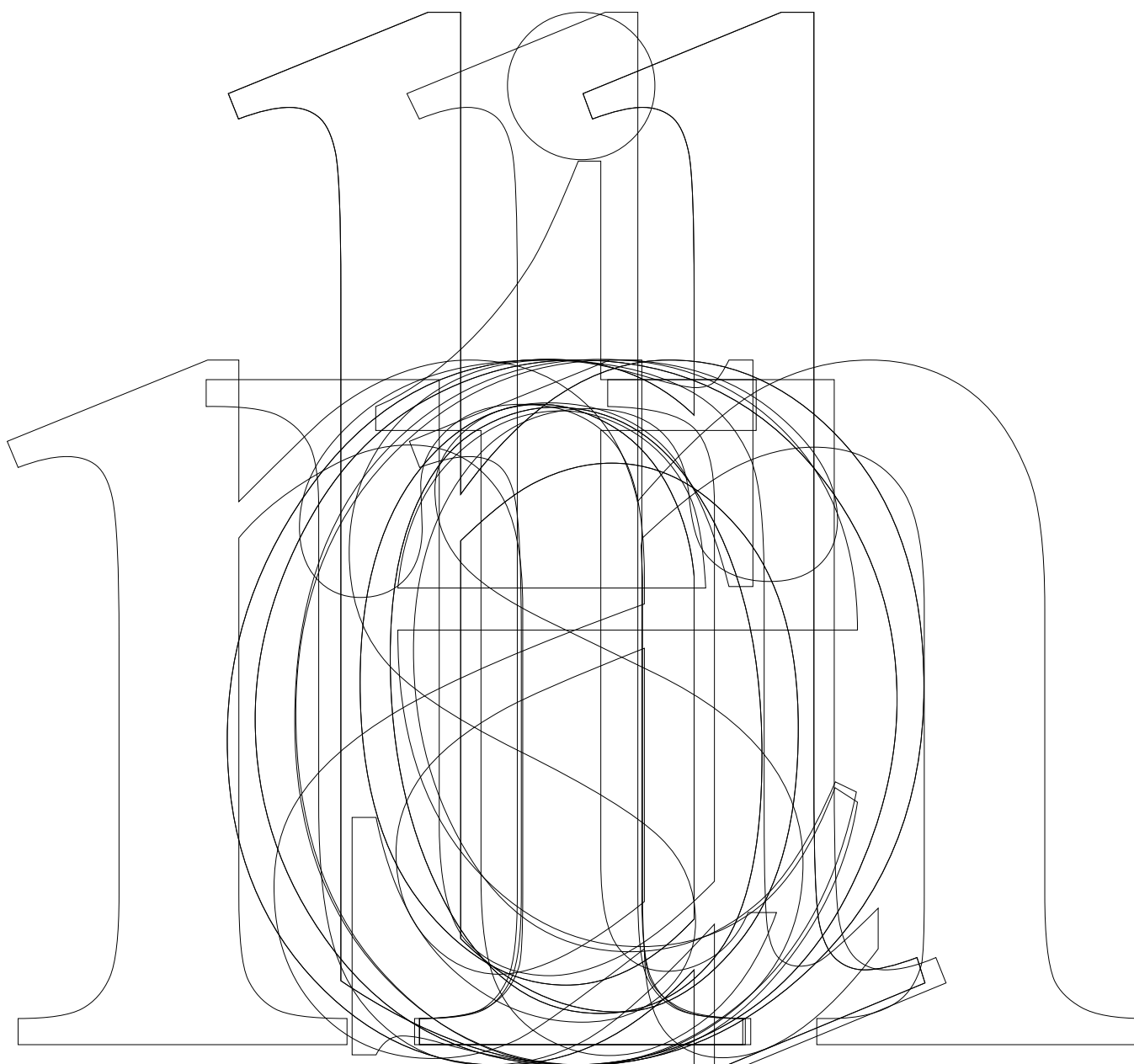
M A X W E L L   H Y E T T

is a Toronto-based interdisciplinary artist with a BFA from OCAD University. His work explores issues of meaning, simultaneity, and the relationship between language and reality. These issues emerge primarily as a concern with information and it's affect; how is information made, where do we keep it, and how do we retrieve it? Maxwell develops these ideas by creating collisions between synonymous and related terms to question the unconscious connections we make while reading.

Art as a Measure of *Discombobulation:*

Three Recent works by Maxwell Hyett

MIRIAM JORDAN-HALADYN

Different modes of perception—this can be as simple as a particular point of view, one that shifts how we see the world. Really, what is the measure of speech? The puzzle of how meaning is quantified. Always in my mind is Dostoevsky's group of drunken artisans, who all say the same word, but mean different things because of slight differences of inflection. Their tongues slurred with wine, by chance bring out new meaning.

I am reminded that meaning comes together in the moment of enunciation. It is a fleeting moment fraught with risk: the risk of being heard, the risk of not being understood or the risk of *not* being heard. The list goes on and is endless. Meaning is contextual because there are so many ways of interpreting things, because we all have our own points of view, perspectives that do not always coincide. Speech forms a moment of dialogue, a meeting of minds between disparate beings, when the divide between self and other is momentarily eclipsed.

Consider three artworks by Toronto-based artist Maxwell Hyett that use language to test the limits of form and meaning: in *Discombobulated* (2016), Hyett layers the letters of the word "discombobulated" on top of each other. He uses no capitals. All we are given are hollow black and white letters against a white ground and the title. I've printed it off and written notes all over it. I've looked at it from multiple angles except the literal. What is the measure of discombobulated? I am intrigued by the word choice. According to my handy desktop dictionary, "discombobulated" means "to disconcert or confuse (someone)," and the usage is typically a humorous one.

Art for many people is a dialogue with the world, a record of who we think we are at any given moment. But what if the art is discombobulating, if it intends to disconcert and confuse you? Is there a possibility of something more?

The latter question becomes more pressing with Hyett's *Artist-spectator* (2015), which consists of a rectangle of black Plexiglas measuring 21.5 x 61 cm. The letters for the words "artist" and "spectator" are presented as two separate images laser cut into the glossy, jet-black surface. However, the letters are incomprehensible because Hyett has layered over these two words all of their respective synonyms. Visually it reminds me of a vinyl record, with the lines cut into the black plastic uncannily similar to the lines of sound cut in circles on records. Is there meaning buried in this blurring of the Duchampian term *artist-spectator*?

In this artwork Hyett reminds me of the transitory nature of speech. What remains after the exchange between the artist and spectator via the artwork? The moment of speech exchange between beings that occurs with an artwork is fleeting. I've often been moved to extremes by artworks, but how often does this leave a trace?

From a distance *Artist-spectator* is a literal black hole—a rectangular shape that reflects the space around it, but is otherwise a dark void. It is only on closer inspection that one realizes there are blurred words, concealed meanings, lines cut into the black.

In Hyett's *Boredom* (2016) the spectator co-constructs the work's meaning by flipping through its pages. The bookwork consists of thirty-six sheets of transparent acetate held together by three aluminum rivets; printed on its pages are what initially appear to be black smudges. The smudges are revealed to be the word "boredom" and all its synonyms printed in a solid black serif font. The words are printed in four columns, each column consisting of a row of ten words. Flipping through the bookwork results in some very amusing poetry. There are gaps in the rows and columns of words, with the final page showing a solitary word: "unmindfulness." How did we get from boredom to this final word? The journey is the point and the seemingly chance results are both surreal and conceptual.

Like a fleeting puff of speech, the dialogue between artist and spectator often disappears. Unless somehow recorded, it is momentarily embodied and then vanishes out of living memory. I myself responded to *Discombobulation* by printing out multiple copies and tracing out the new shapes revealed by the unconventional layering of letters in watercolour. The resulting play of shapes is visually stunning, with so much movement in so few letters. In the moment of enunciation meaning is literally in motion and shifting. So then how can it be measured? And so Hyett reminds me that human perception of time, measured in fragile fleshy heartbeats, is but a drop in the time space of the universe.

MIRIAM JORDAN-HALADYN

is a First Nations writer and artist. She the author of *Dialogic Materialism: Bakhtin, Embodiment and Moving Image Art* (Peter Lang 2014) and co-authored, with J. Haladyn, of The Films and Videos of Jamelie Hassan. Her writings on art, film and Canadian culture have appeared in numerous publications.

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$$F(\rho, P \text{ in } G_n)(\Pi = \int \rho, \, dx... \quad dx_3 \cdots dx_n.$$
$$(\Pi(\rho, P \text{ in } G_n).$$

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$$\text{in } G_n) = \lim_{p=0} F(p, P \text{ in } G_n) \qquad \text{or} \qquad \text{or} \qquad P) = \lim_{p=0} F(p).$$

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$$I(P+Q) = I(P) +$$

$$_n G_n) = I(P'$$

$F(\rho,$

$$I(P \text{ in } G_n) = \lim_{p=0} F(p, P \text{ in } G_n)$$

$$I(P \text{ in } G_n) = \lim_{p=0} F(p, P \text{ in } G_n)$$

or

or

$$I(P) = \lim_{p=0} F(P)$$

$$I(P + Q) = I(P) + I(Q)$$

$$I(P + Q) = I(P) + I(Q)$$

$$I(P \text{ in } G_n) = I(P' \text{ in } G_n).$$

$$I(P \text{ in } G_n) = I(P' \text{ in } G_n).$$

eorem. If x is any finite or transfinite

A typical argument used ... by Aristotle ... Were the infinite admitted, it was said that, f "annihilation of number." ... Were the infinite ... any infinite number of magnitude. numbers would be swallowed ... and b both gr example, given any two fin ... ter than zero, sum $a+b>a$, $a+b>b$ ... infinite ... value a might assume ... what ... a basic property ... ers ought to exhibit. It was in this ... annihilate any finite number ... in which the numbers were ... consequently ... rejected as being in ...

Cantor condemned ... ounds that the was fallacious to assum ... me arithmetic characteristics as did finite ... to his the appe ransfinite ordinal numbers, ... at infinite numbers ere susceptible of modification ... In fact, the distinction between Cantor's ω and $\omega+1$ showed expressly that finite numbers could be ... annihilated ... believe

from $\aleph_0$ there proceeded

Sizing the Infinite, Seeking Eternity

The Egyptians' process of mummification reflects their concern with preserving the body as an aspect of ensuring eternal life. When I see a mummy in a museum it occurs to me that they at least partially achieved the eternal since 3,000 years later that individual's existence—signified by the dried up, but preserved body—is still of great concern to us. Is there an eternity for their soul?

Eternity and infinity are often used interchangeably. However, the former seems to suggest unending, looping time, as in the religious notion of God with no beginning and no end. Everlasting. Can't measure that, or get too logical with the questioning of it. (Or there will be hell to pay, possibly for...well, eternity.)

But then what is infinity? Many definitions suggest it applies to things that cannot be counted or measured, that have no limits.

Georg Cantor (1845–1913) made the infinite tractable in a new way—but it didn't come easy. Following his theorems' implication, Cantor found a way to size the infinite. In mathematical terms, his discovery of the transfinite hierarchy of ascending orders of infinite set meant that infinity was revolutionized and legitimized. Yet his expressions of the mathematical infinite challenged the then-current perceptions that only God could be infinite. His work threatened the church, other mathematicians and the culture at large. Remembering what happened to Galileo and others made Cantor uneasy about some of his findings.

For his own part, Cantor conceived of an absolute infinity transcending all number.Whether or not Cantor's soul lives on eternally as he believed or hoped it would, he may have been consoled to know his life's work, which brought him so much doubt, ended up a significant contribution to his discipline and beyond.

Two centuries later, I am thinking about Georg Cantor and his life and infinity as I arrange fragments into compositions to photograph… and I am reminded of the famous beginning of the poem "Auguries of Innocence," by William Blake:

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.

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"BROWN U DIOP"

is Corinne Diop, a photographer, and Elizabeth Brown, a mathematician. Diop teaches Art at James Madison University in Virginia. She received her BS in Art from JMU and MFA from University of Washington. Brown teaches mathematics at JMU; her PhD and post-doctoral work are from Boston University and Dartmouth College. Their joint effort includes collaborative art and co-teaching courses on art and math through JMU's Institute for Visual Studies.

ALONGSIDE INTERPRETATION

ALISON COOLEY

I invited my computer programmer friend Iain Ireland to speak with me about internet art because I believed he would see things I could not. I have often justified my skepticism of certain forms of internet art as a failure to grasp what is being done, formally, on some level. I asked Iain to look through a selection of internet artworks and talk about them with me, believing that as a programmer he would have a different set of interpretative tools—ones that might reveal the richness of artworks I struggled to find interesting.

Iain is marvelously proficient with computers, and the internet by extension. When we were in high school together, he was the kind of teenager that doodled binary code in the margins of his notes. After completing his undergraduate degree, he went on to do a Master's in Computer Science, and shortly thereafter began working as a compiler developer at IBM in Markham. Knowing enough about the internet, but little about programming languages, it's hard to resist describing Iain as having quasi-magical abilities. I think of him as a polyglot and translator of strange machine tongues—dialects that borrow from English but have wrought their own, far less forgiving grammars. His Twitter bio lists him as "Professional wizard."

Over the course of an afternoon, we looked at a number of works ranging in timespan and approach to the internet. Most of these I chose because I liked them or saw opportunity for fruitful discussion, although I also came to our meeting armed with myriad examples of works I hoped to eventually find compelling. We began with Olia Lialina's 1996 work *My Boyfriend Came Back from the War*, and found ourselves returning to it hungrily throughout the conversation.

"Do you think that I'm frustrated by internet art and digital art because I don't sufficiently understand digital technology?" I asked him at one point in our conversation, after a few hours scrolling through lo-fi, gif-laden websites.

"No," he answered conclusively.

My initial premise so clearly and quickly debunked, I'm left with a recording that documents us sharing in just a few scant instances of really chewing over interpretation. The works neither of us are interested in don't illuminate much about how we're making meaning, just that we both fail at doing it well.

But for Lialina: Iain clicks "developer tools" on *My Boyfriend Came Back from the War*. "The mechanism," he describes, "is simple. Each link takes you to a page with additional frames, which gives the impression of the space multiplying or fragmenting." This I understand, having become familiar with HTML from the late 90s when I had a fansite for the computer game Dogz 3.

"This is a person experimenting with how the internet gives us tools for telling stories differently. The narrative has a certain pace, but the story can be a bunch of things at once. The code isn't sophisticated, because it's 1996."

We play it over and over again. We pause between Lialina's links:
nobody here can love
(click)
or understand me.

We revel in the ambiguous breakage of the line.

We look at other works, we come back. We browse the off-shots and homages to Lialina's work on *myboyfriend-camebackfromth.ewar.ru*.

"That was art on the internet taking advantage of computers to build something that addresses something that isn't the internet," Iain mused. "And then everyone else who gets excited about it can borrow its structure to tell a bunch of different kinds of stories."

I describe how our contemporary art world engages the internet—that now there is art about the internet and how it shapes our understanding of the world, which we call "post-internet art." That post-internet art isn't necessarily online, but rather reflects on a culture influenced deeply by the internet.

We compare Iain's observation about internet-as-form vs internet-as-content to the other works we peruse throughout the afternoon, by artists like Hito Steyerl, Hennessy Youngman, Amalia Ulman, Lorna Mills… More gifs upon gifs.

"The more they talk about the internet, the less I find it compelling," Iain divulged. "I'm not sure that says anything about internet art as a concept."

Which is more or less how I feel. And how naive of me to have imagined that talking about the internet with a computer programmer might change my feelings about the medium. I'm disappointed, I admit, that Iain doesn't see things that are invisible to me. Or he does, but they're not as important as I hoped. His particular tools for interpretation aren't world-shattering, and my experiment has more or less failed.

Failed, except in that Iain chose to read the source running underneath the pages—a brief formal revelation. I try putting the source code in analogical terms. If this were a painting, would the source code be the brush strokes or the construction of a canvas stretcher? I'm not sure if it translates, but I am sure some things are more important to see than others.

ALISON COOLEY

is a writer, curator, and educator based in Toronto. Her work deals with the intersection of natural history and visual culture, socially engaged artistic practice, craft histories, and experiential modes of art criticism. She is the 2014 co-recipient of the Middlebrook Prize for Young Curators, and her critical writing has recently appeared in FUSE, Canadian Art, and KAPSULA. She is also the host and producer of What It Looks Like, a podcast about art in Canada.