


```
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Silver Bird's Nest illustration created from a picture by Flickr user PerpetualPlum

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/perpetualplum/3598355084/#/>

Rainbow gradient found on a post by user Erroneus on InkscapeForum.com

<http://www.inkscapeforum.com/viewtopic.php?f=5&t=5470>

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Masthead

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A Reader's Guide to Libre Graphics Magazine

In this magazine, you may find concepts, words, ideas and things that are new to you. Good. That means your horizons are expanding. The problem with that, of course, is that sometimes, things with steep learning curves are less fun than those without.

That's why we're trying to flatten the learning curve. If, while reading *Libre Graphics Magazine*, you encounter an unfamiliar word, project name, whatever it may be, chances are good there's an explanation.

At the back of this magazine, you'll find a glossary and resource list. The glossary aims to define words that are unique to the world of Libre Graphics. The resource list provides valuable information about tools, licenses, whatever items we may be mentioning.

Practically, this means that if, for example, you're reading an article about DejaVu (see pages 51 to 53), you can always flip to the back of the magazine, look up DejaVu in the resource list and become quickly informed about it. This provides some instant gratification, giving you the resources you need to understand, in a moment, just what we're talking about.

We hope you like our system.

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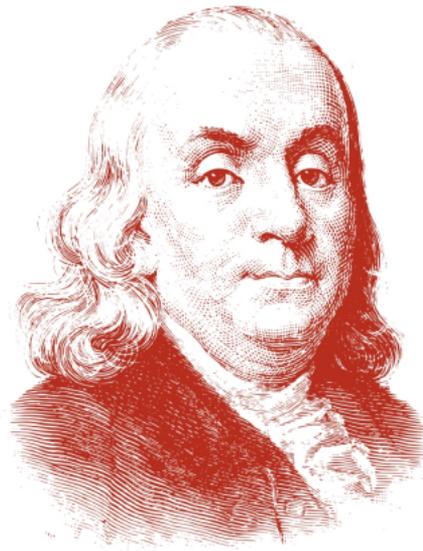
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SAGITTARIE WOZNIAK
 ¥ sagittaire ¥ geek



If, at first...

ginger coons

First times are seen as momentous events in our lives. The first time away from home, first job, first kiss, all are seen as seminal events, meant to be packed up and remembered, fondly or not. The first, narratively, carries a heavier weight in our memories than so many subsequent events. After the first time, you start getting used to it, you become proficient, the magic and mystery start to wear off.

This issue, we're talking about firsts. We're talking about first experiences, first efforts, first anythings, about the liberation of letting go and trying something new, and the terror that sometimes comes with it. Firsts are about taking flight, about leaving behind the things you know and embracing something else.

That's where our second theme, Taking Flight, comes in. Taking flight, leaving behind, in a physical and a metaphorical sense, carries with it that sense of liberation and trepidation, that change of perspective. Lifting off of our metaphorical ground and looking down from above packs the power to change our perspective, to let us a little bit out of ourselves. In the same way that seeing your own city from above can completely change your conception of it, seeing your own possibility and creative process from above has the power to make you stop and think again about the elements of process, style or workflow that you take for granted.

Taken together, the ideas of First Encounters and Taking Flight are all about discovering the new, the momentous, the big and the unexpected that you never even thought you possessed. These things, in your own head, in your own possibility, unlocked if only you give them a chance and break from the norm.

That's why, this month, we're talking about firsts and flights, about the magic, the mystery, the revelation of doing something new and discovering what you never even suspected you possessed. We've got articles about first experiences in design, with tools and even more theoretical firsts, too.

We hope that you, picking up *Libre Graphics Magazine* for the first time, see it that way, too. We hope you'll join us on a journey which promises to be an interesting, hopefully long, and maybe just a little bumpy.

All of this, we think, may just encourage you to think about collecting a few more of those all-important firsts for yourself.

ginger coons is a member of the Libre Graphics Magazine editorial team.

Production Colophon

Ana Carvalho & Ricardo Lafuente



Software

In the process of bringing this first issue into being, our work was made easier by the excellent F/LOSS design tools available.

Scribus 1.3.8 was used to typeset and arrange all the magazine content into a final layout for print.

Inkscape 0.48 was the tool of choice to create the magazine cover, as well as the "Have your say", calendar and UpStage ads.

GIMP 2.7.2 helped us to retouch and edit columnist photos and most of the bitmap illustrations, as well as converting some PDF files into bitmap for inclusion in the layout.

Pdftk 1.41, a tool for merging several PDFs into one (among many, many other uses), helped us streamline our workflow and produce the layout using smaller Scribus files instead of a big, heavy one.

Git 1.7.0.4 was the version control system that we used to share work between ourselves, as well as providing it for anyone interested in taking a peek into the process. **Gitorious** was our service of choice when it came to publishing the magazine repository. We also used **gitg** and **git-cola** to provide a graphical interface for the Git repository.

A spreadsheet for sorting through submissions was created in **OpenOffice.org Calc**.

Finally, all plain-text editing was done inside **Gedit** and **vim**.

Fonts

Linux Libertine *body text*

Linux Biolinum *footnotes and captions*

PropCourier Sans *titles*

Linux Libertine and **Linux Biolinum** are two beautiful and well-crafted typefaces by the Libertine Open Fonts Project.

PropCourier Sans is the official custom typeface for Libre Graphics Magazine. It is a friendly fork of Open Source Publishing's **NotCourier Sans**, a monospaced typeface which sports the statement "We are not here to be polite." PropCourier Sans is the proportional version of NotCourier; it is an ongoing effort that will be worked on and updated on each issue of Libre Graphics Magazine, following the "Release early, release often" principle. You'll find some inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the current version, but we'd rather just use what we can have now instead of going for a finished and polished typeface -- whatever "finished and polished" might mean. We decided that we would prefer being honest than being right, hence PropCourier's tagline: "We are not here to be correct."

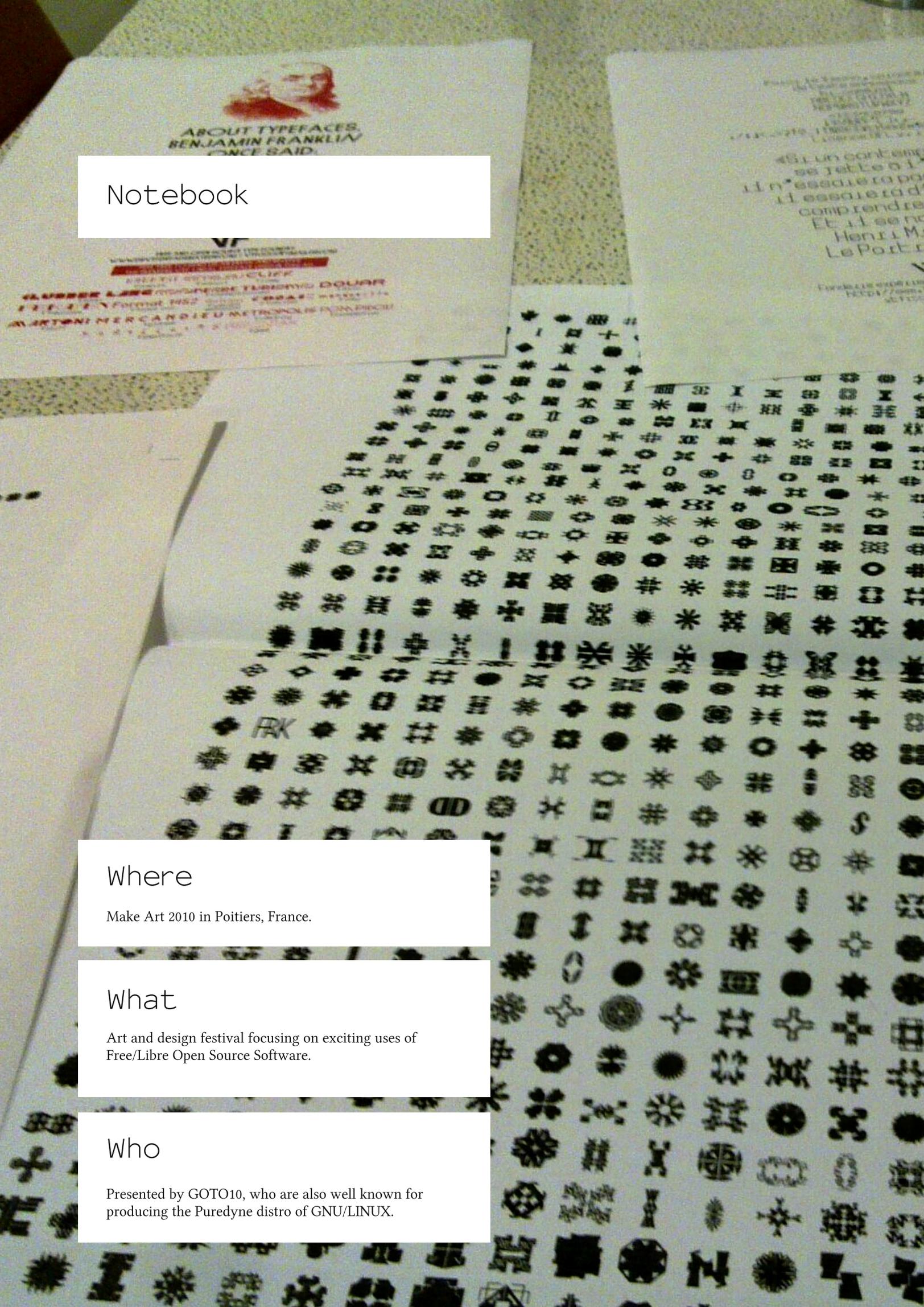
Finds

If you flip over to page 18, you'll find a text illustration based on a photo of Pierre Marchand. This effect was achieved with a Python script written by **Alexandre Truppel** who is 14 years old, and is attending tenth grade of school in Portugal.

Alex popped up in Hacklaviva (a hackerspace in Porto, Portugal) during a Python meet-up. It didn't take long for everyone to be amazed by his coding-fu, complete with his own full-fledged GUIs. When we asked Alex if we could use his programs to create illustrations for the magazine, we got a positive response, along with some heartening remarks: "I never thought my programs could be used for anything else besides random fun. I did the program as a challenge to learn more Python and to work with images. Then I used it to make some gifts for my family."

Ana Carvalho and Ricardo Lafuente make up Manufactura Independente, a design research studio based in Porto, Portugal. Their design practice orbits around the principles of free software and free culture.

<http://manufacturaindependente.org>



Notebook

Where

Make Art 2010 in Poitiers, France.

What

Art and design festival focusing on exciting uses of Free/Libre Open Source Software.

Who

Presented by GOTO10, who are also well known for producing the Puredyne distro of GNU/LINUX.

Prettiest

Type specimens from VTF foundry. They're funny, they're well designed and there's a truly exhaustive selection of dingbats and stars. Without a doubt, the most exciting bits of paper I've seen in a while.

Most Collaborative

Nancy, the dingbats font from Open Source Publishing. Visitors to the exhibition space were invited to create their own interpretation of hundreds of characters, from squares to arrows to numbers in circles. Resulted in an impressive array of different styles and levels of interpretation.



Least Expected

One visitor who, upon seeing the gender breakdown of artists in the room, promptly asked why there were so few women. And then wanted to talk about it. For an hour. Good debate all 'round.

Most Immersive

Electroacoustic concerts held in the planetarium. Relaxing end to a long day, with some truly neat visuals.

OPEN FASHION

SVG
problem solving
sew-brilliant.org

Unique garments,
customizable, remixable,
recycled materials

A t-shirt designed to be modified by the wearer: when it's no longer needed as a garment, the user can create a soft sculpture - art quilt.
hypermodern.net/tag/open-fashion

Constructed out of reused plastic, the quilted Gyre Vest brings attention to the North Pacific garbage patch.
peteippel.com/art/gyre-vest



New Releases

Sozi

<http://sozi.baierouge.fr/wiki/doku.php>

An SVG based presentation program, allowing users to create on a movable canvas. Say goodbye to slides.

Sintel

<http://www.sintel.org>

Another year, another Blender Foundation project. *Sintel* is a short film showing Blender at its best and most beautiful.

Blender 2.55b

<http://www.blender.org>

A major new release of Blender. Road tested on production of *Sintel*.

SparkleShare 0.2b1

<http://sparkleshare.org>

Makes version control painless. Allows for folder based workflow, but with the added power of full-on version control.

Hugin 2010.2.0

<http://hugin.sourceforge.net>

Hugin, our favourite panorama stitching program, has a pack of new features, including masking and a mosaic mode.

Inkscape 0.48 Essentials for Web Designers (book)

<https://www.packtpub.com/inkscape-0-48-essentials-for-web-designers/book>

An overview of Inkscape 0.48, geared specifically towards the needs of web designers.



Freed Fonts, Strong Web

Dave Crossland

Fonts are essential to the design of every web page, and true web fonts are about to bring the typographic sophistication of print to the web in force.

It's taken a while. In 1998, Internet Explorer 4 implemented the feature with a DRM font format, Embedded OpenType (EOT), because it was part of CSS2. Despite that fact, it was ignored for years by other browsers until CSS co-founder Håkon Wium Lie championed it 10 years later. Slowly all the other big browsers began to support regular TrueType fonts, and resisted pressure to implement a standardised DRM format. Today SVG Fonts are used in iPhones, Internet Explorer 9 supports TrueType fonts, and Libre tools do EOT conversions. Web fonts work everywhere.

In May, Google launched the first font service providing only Libre fonts. The blog for the service (<http://googlewebfonts.blogspot.com>) recently revealed some details about its growth – nearly 500,000 domains showing web fonts to 17 million people a day.

In 2011, CSS3 will take web fonts beyond the simple font linking feature of 1998. Designers will finally be able to use the full power of OpenType fonts directly in webpages. This can be tested today with Firefox 4 beta releases.

The web is about to become as typographically powerful as the latest proprietary desktop publishing applications. This means that web designers should now take time to learn about how typefaces vary and what those variations mean for readers – there will be a lot of libre fonts to choose from, and we should choose fonts wisely.

Three kinds of font classification schemes are useful to guide designers in their choices.

1. Simple Categories. These are deceptively simple. The deception is their "Other" categories. CSS itself has a very simple scheme (Serif, Sans-Serif, Fantasy, Mono) and this is

useful because everyone can remember its groups. Contrast that with the 'IBM Family' scheme which uses a long list of historical genres and many "Miscellaneous" caverns.

2. Parametric systems. Common forms of the elements of the Latin alphabet are described and related. The result allows users to drill down into a font collection interactively: "Letters that wide, serifs this thick, an axis of contrast at that angle." PANOSE's second version was a sophisticated example that has sadly disappeared thanks to an acquisition by and merger with Hewlett Packard.

3. Tagging. Just as we tag photographs in centralised proprietary photo storage services, font can be tagged. I imagine that eventually a de-centralised federated font classification network service will be made, perhaps building on the Libre-licensed Typedia.org project. While the first two have their place in learning how fonts are different, tagging is for me the most useful classification technique when deciding on a font.

The words people tag with are often not the words used by other schemes. Instead, people relate to fonts with what Ovink described in 1938 as atmosphere values: "Those properties by which [a font] excites feelings within the reader."

The web is about to become as typographically powerful as the latest proprietary desktop publishing applications.

*Today, web fonts are most useful at large sizes where the rendering problems associated with hinting do not occur, where images of text are common. Since the beginning of the web, a lot of large-size text on webpages has **not** been typeset in overly-familiar system fonts. Instead, headlines are frozen into static images. This can be only just accessible at best. Today, the accessibility of the web impacts everyone because it defines our ability to machine-translate the webs of other language cultures.*

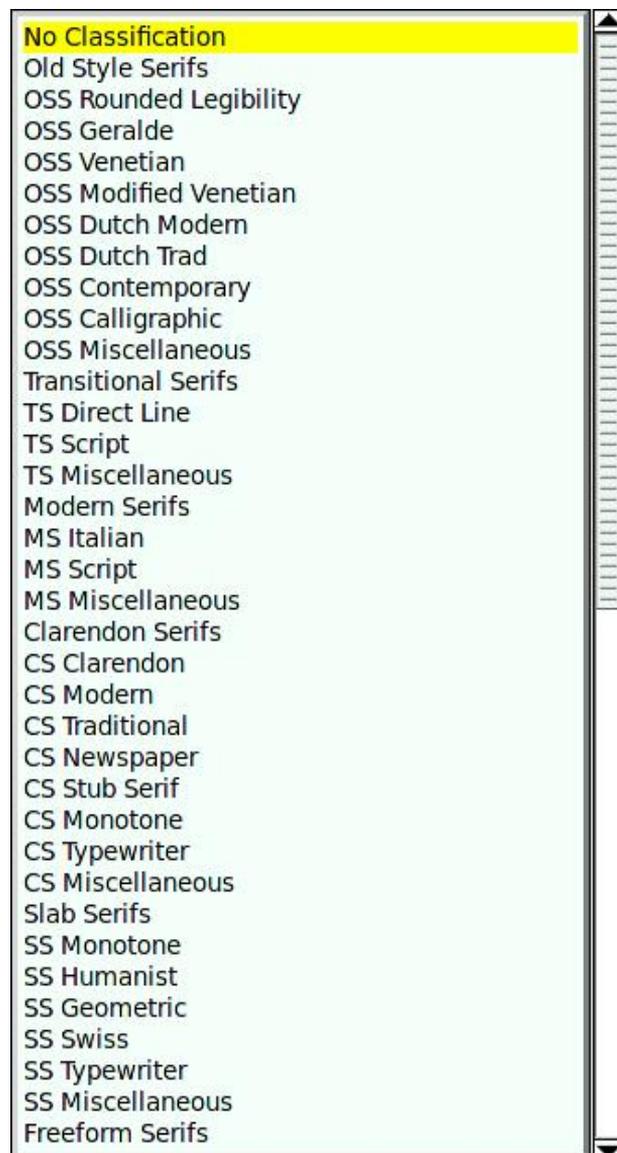
Curiously, Ovink found in his research that general readers can't tell the difference in atmosphere values of two typefaces which are very similar. I might suggest that this means designing new type is, for practical purposes, entirely pointless.

Most importantly, he concluded that picking the "wrong" font is a "missed... opportunity to intensify the force of impression of the text in a considerable degree."

To web designers choosing web fonts, watch out.

Dave Crossland believes anyone can learn to design great fonts. He is a type designer fascinated by the potential of software freedom for graphic design, and runs workshops on type design around the world.

<http://understandingfonts.com>





This is the first day of my life

Eric Schrijver

The Dutch computer scientist Edgar Dijkstra believed in first times. He thought it a contemporary charade to give programs version numbers. Since it's possible for a program to be correct, better to get them right the first time around. I don't agree with Edgar Dijkstra. I believe I will achieve my first proper column after five or six tries.

There is a second first time, when you finally manage to rise above the preconceptions and ideas you started your project with. Then your project can start to work for you.

The rumour that Bill Joy wrote the vi editor in one night is persistent, even though he denies it himself. Anything awesome has a gestation period. But we just happen to love believing in spontaneous creation.

As to Libre Graphics, it is at the nexus of many exciting developments. Libre Graphics lies at the intersection of art and technology, science and the humanities. And I am quite sure we will see a number of wonderful projects take flight.

Applying F/LOSS principles to art and design might help us improve visual literacy, just as F/LOSS improves computer literacy. Applying F/LOSS principles to art and design might help us better understand the knowledge present in the creative process.

Not just that, I think it might help us understand what it means to share. Getting artists to share will be difficult, initially. Scientists have built an economy where giving things away will increase their reputation, as well as the chances of getting and keeping jobs. Artists, on the other hand, traditionally try to earn money by selling their work.

Even if the production methods of art have changed radically, the art market is still built on scarcity. Galleries will produce a limited number of copies of a video or photograph even if this medium potentially allows for unlimited copying and redistribution.

With all the talk of sharing that comes from the world of

Anything awesome has a
gestation period. But we
just happen to love
believing in spontaneous
creation.

F/LOSS, I have never heard much about just how freaking scary it can be to share. Sharing means giving up control. Letting go of control can be very, very difficult.

Of course, it is potentially beautiful, too. Recognizing that my understanding is limited, allowing someone else to find something in my work that I had never seen before can be beautiful and fulfilling. Yet, having someone reinterpret my artwork is not the same as someone coming up with a clever new use for a sorting algorithm. My art deals with people and emotions. That is why there is the possibility for such a reinterpretation to hurt me.

(There's always the option to keep something for myself. Assuming current copyright law, good health and some cooperation from my progeny, it will subsequently take about 130 years before it lapses into the public domain.)

Anyway.

Whenever something wonderful takes off, it feels like a beginning. But I don't want to take the idea of beginning too literally. It's more like the experience opens up new possibilities.

I have never heard much about
just how freaking scary it can
be to share. Sharing means
giving up control.

At the same time, it seems to make up for the hardship experienced up to this point.

Madonna also treats the first time as a metaphor. She references the prototypical first time in "Like a Virgin." Yet it's not about the first time, it's about when it's *like* the first time. Open source developers work like Madonna. Projects are well underway before they reach 1.00. This is not the first release, this is the first release that works like the developer wanted it to initially. What the first attempt should have been like but necessarily couldn't.

In fact, many projects never even reach 1.00. Most things never happen. When David Bowie shook the scene with his Ziggy Stardust character, he'd already had a trial run with a band called Arnold Corns, for which he styled a fashion designer to be the lead singer.

Release early release often is a Torvalds maxim. In F/LOSS, next to the projects that take flight, we get to see all the other projects as well, the entire primordial soup. We don't just get Ziggy Stardust, we get Arnold Corns too.

It's a mess, frankly. This might not work for the Dijkstras of this world. F/LOSS encourages a mindset of bringing together disparate sources to make something new. This is why artists could potentially feel at home. There's never a clean slate when you make a work of art or design. We are informed by our personal history, we are informed by all the other works we know. Bowie, on Ziggy, said "it just seemed perfectly natural for me at the time to put together all these odds and ends of art and culture that I really adore." Never mind that everything always comes from somewhere, when it starts to work together, it feels like something new. It feels like you've just begun.

Eric Schrijver (Amsterdam, 1984) is a visual artist who makes installations and performances. Eric teaches Design for new media at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague. He is inspired by open source and programming culture.

<http://ericschrijver.nl>

F/LOSS in the classroom

Ludivine Loiseau

The École de Recherche Graphique in Brussels has a history of introducing F/LOSS tools to its students. But in the autumn, 2010 semester, it went all out. Ludi OSP taught the first instance of a class solely devoted to F/LOSS-based design tools and tactics. Collected below are reactions and recollections from the class, translated into English.

Session 1 - September 24
according to Jérémy and Jiacinto

The goal of this session was to explain the principles behind F/LOSS software (GIMP and others). These programs are conceived by programmers who have decided to develop, on Linux (to start). Freeware: These softwares are free to use and let the possibility open, for users capable of programming, to modify the code of the software and, by connection, its functions. Knowing that the license for a similar Adobe program might be 700€ and that it takes more than one program to make a work flow, freeware is something of obvious interest.

! freeware ≠ open source → libre and open source do not mean monetarily free

The goal of our first project is to create an alphabet made up of photos. Choose a theme, take photos of objects which fit the theme. Each object has to start with a specific letter of the alphabet.

The photos are then modified using GIMP, followed by Inkscape to turn a bitmap-based image (JPG, tiff, PSD in GIMP) into a vector-based image (the drawing is written by the computer in the form of coordinates and points, making it infinitely scalable, allowing scale changes without quality loss). Once in a vector format (.ai in Adobe Illustrator) the image can now be used as a font after some manipulation with FontForge.

Onto the job, kids!

SESSION 2 – OCTOBER 1
according to Edwin and Flore

In this session, we familiarized ourselves with pixels in order to better understand that digital image matrix (acquiring, creating, processing or storing in binary form). We also learned about the existence of a multitude of image formats like .tiff (for high quality, lossless images) or .jpg (images compressed with an

algorithm which simplifies pixels of similar colours). We also deepened our use of GIMP, working directly on our laptops. Not only that, but we had an introduction to vectorising images which allowed us to visualize the next step in our alphabet-building process.

SESSION 3 – OCTOBER 15
according to Viola and Gwenael

Some notions on ASCII art: images are replaced by text → 128 characters monospace, which means that all letters have the same pitch. If the image is crowded, all it takes is to change the typeface.

Vectorisation with Inkscape: vector-based formats are made up of mathematical coordinates, not pixels. It's possible to have access to the source code of vectors in an image and also to change, at will, the source code.

SESSION 4 – OCTOBER 22
according to Adrien

We took a look at the command line - which provides a space for executing actions by typing text in a window provided for that purpose. This allows us to carry out actions in batches, like reducing the size of multiple images by inputting a single line, modifying a whole text, executing actions in multiple programs at once... Once we have that figured out, it could prove to be very useful and advantageous.

Next, we had an intro to FontForge, a program for creating fonts. We learned how to import images to make a font, modify them...

<http://www.erg.be/erg>

http://www.ludi.be/erg/doku.php?id=notes_de_cours

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The unicorn tutorial

ginger coons

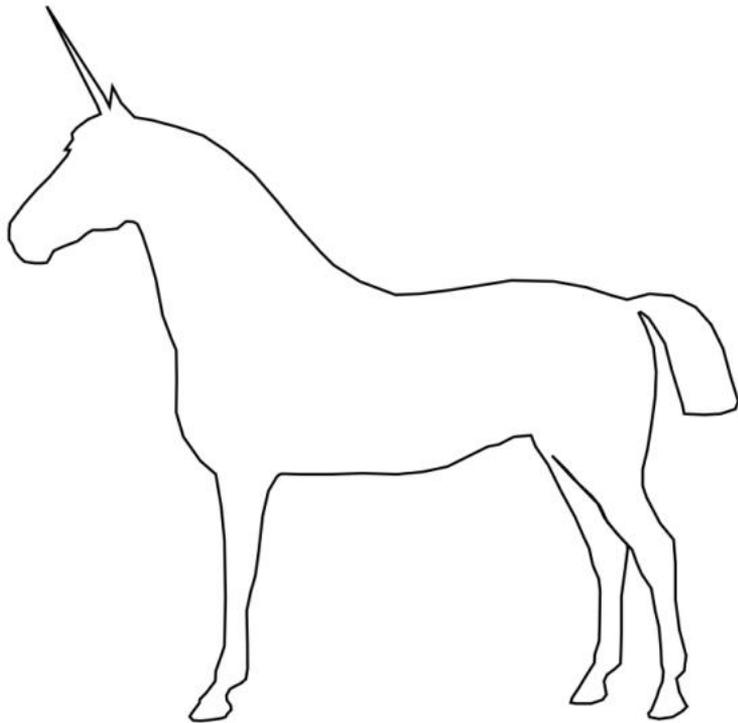
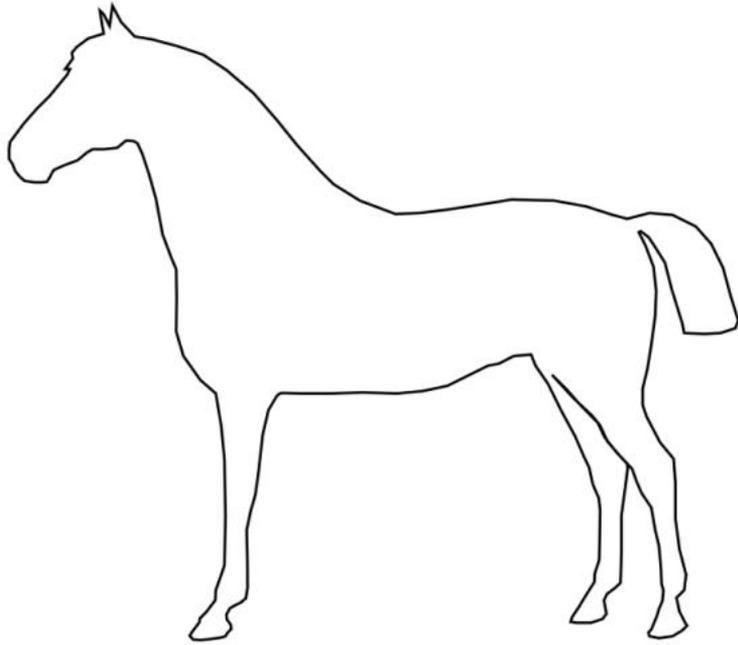
On vectors, nodes and the power of simple examples

I remember my first introduction to nodes and vector-based illustration. When I was about seven years old, my father, who was a high school tech teacher at the time, sat me down in front of Corel Draw 3. Up until that day, I had seen the program as a repository of clip art, not knowing what I could actually do with it. He loaded a clip art horse. Everything changed when he showed me the node selection tool. The previously clean line drawing suddenly had a mass of dots all along its outline. He explained that these were nodes, the points defining the shape of the horse.

And then the magical bit: he had me select the node at the apex of the horse's ear. When I clicked and dragged that node, the horse changed. The ear elongated, following my mouse. He instructed me to move the node a little distance and then drop it. The horse was no longer a horse. Elongating that ear had turned it into a unicorn.

Since then, I've learned more about how nodes really work and what can be done with them. But that lesson still sticks in my head. It was an incredibly powerful introduction. It started a (so far) life-long love of vectors. A love of all their extensibility, elegance and possibility.

So I present to you a horse. More accurately, it's just an outline of a horse, no shading, nothing fancy. It's a horse with two pointy ears, one of which has a little node at the apex. You can find the SVG file on our website. If you want, you can download it, open it up with Inkscape or whatever vector manipulation program you use, and turn it into a unicorn. To me, it's the most powerful, understandable first introduction to nodes and their possibilities.



Pierre Marchand talks Fontmatrix, responsiveness and user engagement

Dave Crossland interviews Pierre Marchand

Pierre Marchand is the creator of Fontmatrix, the leading F/LOSS font management program.

Dave Crossland: You were working as a graphic designer [when you started working on Fontmatrix].

Pierre Marchand: I pretended to be a graphic designer. But I wasn't really a graphic designer. I started because I had this little, little, little agency and no clients. So I started to play a bit with programming. There was this program to compose text by hand. And there was, in this program, a font chooser. You could choose a font file and it was not enough for me. So I was looking for a font manager, didn't find one. Because I was working a lot with FreeType it was quite trivial for me to just have something to display fonts. All in all, it was really for my own needs.

What happened next? I posted on the Scribus mailing list. I wrote a little font viewer manager. And what happened next? Still no clients. Still time to program. At this point, nobody but regular Scribus users were following the list and you start to do something and Wow! people are interested in the project and come with some user feedback. And there's a lot of raising your self esteem. It works well for that. And so I did continue, because in my regular work, it was completely the reverse. No clients at all and no client, no client. So I had just enough money to live and with coding, you need nothing more than a computer. Coming from being nobody to being someone. So it was very interesting for me... And when you're doing something interesting, people come to you, they listen to you and you can discuss things you have no occasion to do face to face. So it was the first push to work on Fontmatrix. My own needs and after that, the good reception by people.

There were people contributing in terms of ideas...

A lot. From being very reactive. If someone tells you that he would like something like a new feature and one hour later, there's the feature in the Subversion repository, they're happy. And they come back again and again and say "I would like that

and that..." It's very useful for the developer because you can't have all the ideas. You're just alone and you have your own ideas, but that's just a subset of what's possible. So it's really interesting to have a lot of user input. And because you are very reactive and you're ready to just stop doing your stuff and work on what people want, they are happy and they come back again. So it's a...

Cycle.

You were working on it, kind of in your spare time, while you were doing freelance graphic design work.

It was not exactly my spare time. It was my main time.

Because you were filling out the extra hours in the day that weren't being filled by clients. And you were building the tools that you needed for yourself as a designer.

It wasn't even exactly that. When I finished school, after that, I spent ten years working on my art work, etc. And I stopped because of things, life. But I was very frustrated about stopping. And when I started working on Free Software, writing Free Software, for me, it was a means to come back. To come back to something creative. The more I work on Free Software, the more I write code, the more I think that there is really creative work there.

In programming?

Yeah. Not like code as art. I don't like that. It's not exactly that. But the practice of writing code can give you something like the practice of doing art work. But the result is not the same. You have to go a bit further to make it a real art work. And it's what I can do with OSP nowadays. And Constant. I take my handcraft of writing code and I turn it into something artistic. But it's another work.

You need to start somewhere. When you start by writing Free Software, you are writing the place to do this work. Free Software gives you access to the machine, the culture, the coding. You can't do real art work with computers without going Free Software. Because if you try to do that by using Microsoft APIs to write, you're still a user. You don't own the machine. The machines own you. It's the same for Fontmatrix. Even if now, I'm more productive at working on Fontmatrix, really focused on user integration and interactions, still, the way I do it is looking for new ideas and finding something like a compromise between my way of coding, which is a bit weird

[I]f you... us[e]
Microsoft APIs to
write, you're still
a user. You don't
own the machine.
The machines own
you.



sometimes, and the way the users can be part of the project. To form a community. Because I need this community to continue to work...

To motivate you.

Yeah. And to make it meaningful. I mean, if there's nobody to use your software, there's no point in publishing it.

How do you think the Free Software community, the Free Software programming community, can engage people who work professionally on those kinds of jobs? There are user interface designers, interaction designers, who do that kind of work professionally.

Hmm. The huge work was really to change my mind. About the software I was writing. To try to think as a user. In the state it was, I heard users complaining "I can't do this, I can't do that with the software." And I was just answering, each time, "Yes, you can do that. You have to go to this menu and this sub-menu and click there and it's possible. It's possible this way or this way." To make it usable by these people, you have to just change that into when you hear something like that, to think "Okay, so the menu is not in the right place. They can't find it. So I will change my software to make it accessible for users." So I started like that.

Because it's a Qt application, it's cross-platform, right? So it's going to be useful for users on Windows and Mac OS.

Useful not as a font manager. They have font managers. But it will be useful to make them Free.

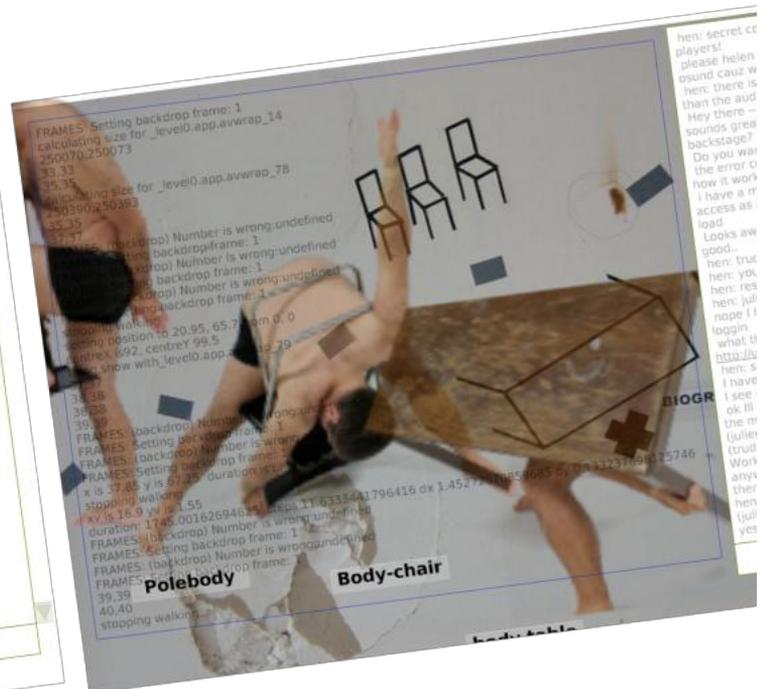
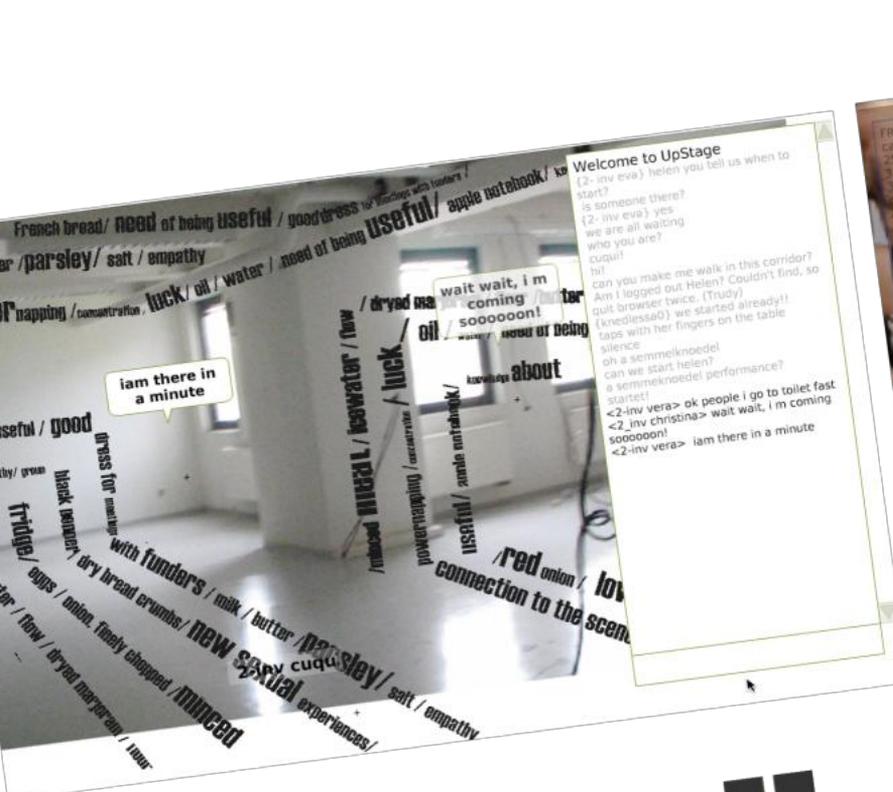
What do you mean?

I mean that they have enough font managers on Mac OS X and Windows platforms. They don't need FontMatrix as badly as on Linux, where there's nothing at all.

But the value of FontMatrix as a font manager comes from its Free Software touch. I mean that if you want to run Free Software on your platform, whatever it is, you need Free Software. So if you're on Mac and you have a feeling it will be great because you've tried Inkscape and it was cool and you've tried FontForge and it was cool and you want to continue to use Free Software, maybe you need a font manager. So you're seeking a Free font manager and there's nothing. But hopefully,

there will be FontMatrix in a state of development ready for daily use.

But as a font manager, what it will bring for these users is really the freedom and the community, the direct access to developers. But as a font manager itself, it won't be more than Suitcase or something. In the first case. After that, as people can come with new ideas, we can imagine that it will bring something really new, because it's really fitted to their needs. But in the first place, it'll just be a font manager, as a font manager for all those users. And if they're used to using font managers like Linotype Font Explorer, etc., they won't be amazed by it. It will be just another font manager. And the real value will come from the freedom of the software.



UpStage is an open source web-based platform for live online performance. Artists collaborate in real time to manipulate media that has been created and uploaded beforehand (still and moving images, animations and audio) and real-time elements (text, text2speech, web cam feeds and live drawing). Audiences interact with and contribute to the performance in real-time via a text chat tool.

UpStage

The fourth annual festival of performances in UpStage, 101010, took place on 10-11 October 2010 and featured 17 performances created by more than 50 artists around the world. Visit www.upstage.org.nz for images and excerpts from the shows. Next year's festival will take place on 11 November 2011 - the 111111 UpStage Festival!

UpStage is currently maintained by computing students at the Auckland University of Technology, and by volunteer open source programmers. Interested programmers and artists are always welcome!

Get involved!

Programmers: join the developers' list; download the code; install your own UpStage server (we are looking for testers right now for our new installer package); contribute to the code.

Artists: join the announcements list; come to an online open session; create your own show.

Audience: join the announcements list; come to the shows!

Visit <http://www.upstage.org.nz> or email info@upstage.org.nz for more information.

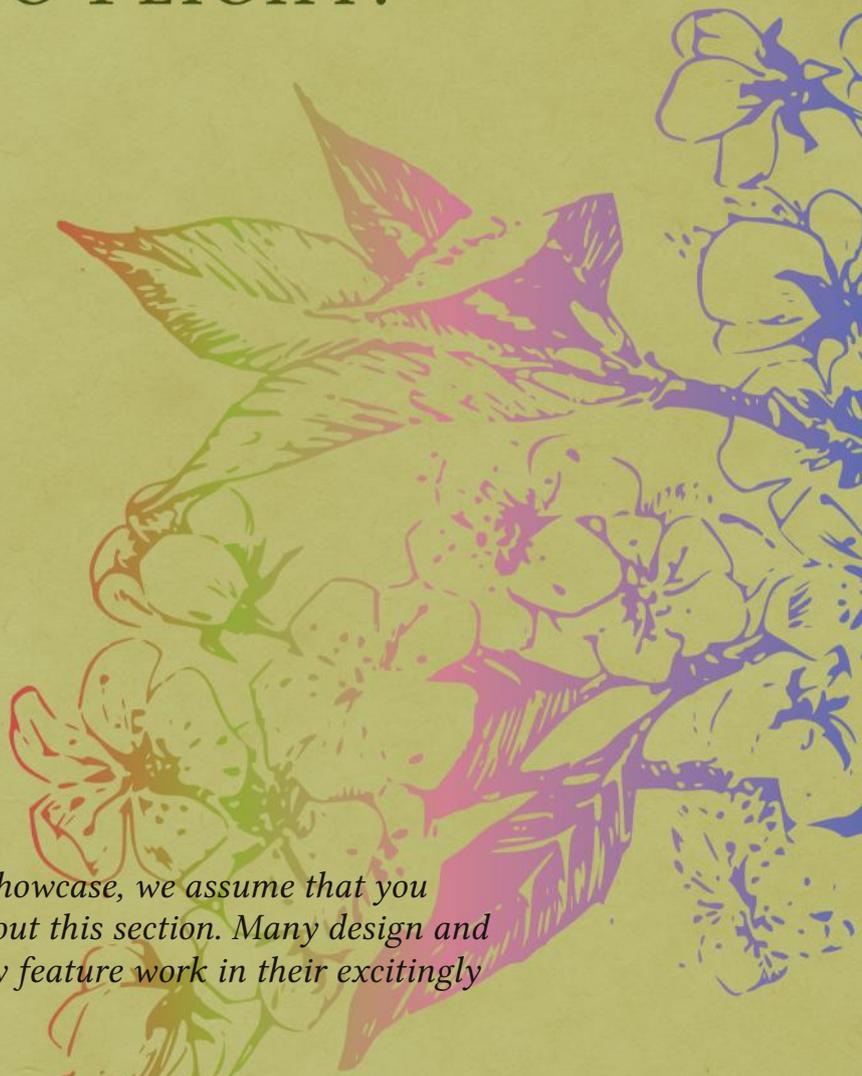
SHOWCASE.

TAKING FLIGHT.

By virtue of being called a showcase, we assume that you already know quite a bit about this section. Many design and art publications prominently feature work in their excitingly glossy pages.

The difference, of course, between our showcase and those others is that we do care about the process and tool chain behind the works we show. For that reason, every work featured in this section has been created using F/LOSS graphics programs. Sometimes, those F/LOSS tools are among other techniques. Sometimes, they are the only tool in use.

Our goal, in the showcase, is to show you just how stunning F/LOSS graphics can be. We hope you'll agree that the works on these pages are exciting, well crafted and very much worth pulling out and sticking to your walls.



Laura C. Hewitt

CAMOUFLAGE AND MIMICRY ILLUMINATED DRAWING

Statement

When I was a little kid and heard adults mention "illuminated manuscripts", I visualized an enormous dark archive, reminiscent of cathedrals and the basement vaults of libraries, full of rich images that were softly glowing. I was disappointed to discover that it just meant books with weird little pictures in the margins, however intriguing those books might be. Still, decades later, when someone mentions illuminated manuscripts, the first image that comes to mind is my childhood vision and I have to consciously remember that it's illustrated texts, always with a sense of disappointment.

Flight and Pursuit is the adult creation of my childhood vision. I have combined work from my adult artistic practice and interests with the fairy tales, myths and dreams of childhood to create the imagery. It is an adult narrative of my flight from and pursuit of technology; my love/hate relationship with computers, motorcycles, microwaves, compound bows, my hearing aids, clocks...the entire paraphenalia of technological apparatus. Combined with pre-Internet childhood imagery, it becomes an expression of my flight through, and pursuit of, time and memory.

42 x 18". Watercolor, aquarelle pencil and pastel on paper stretched over what more or less amounts to a fancy lightbox. From a series of illuminated drawings I call Flight and Pursuit.

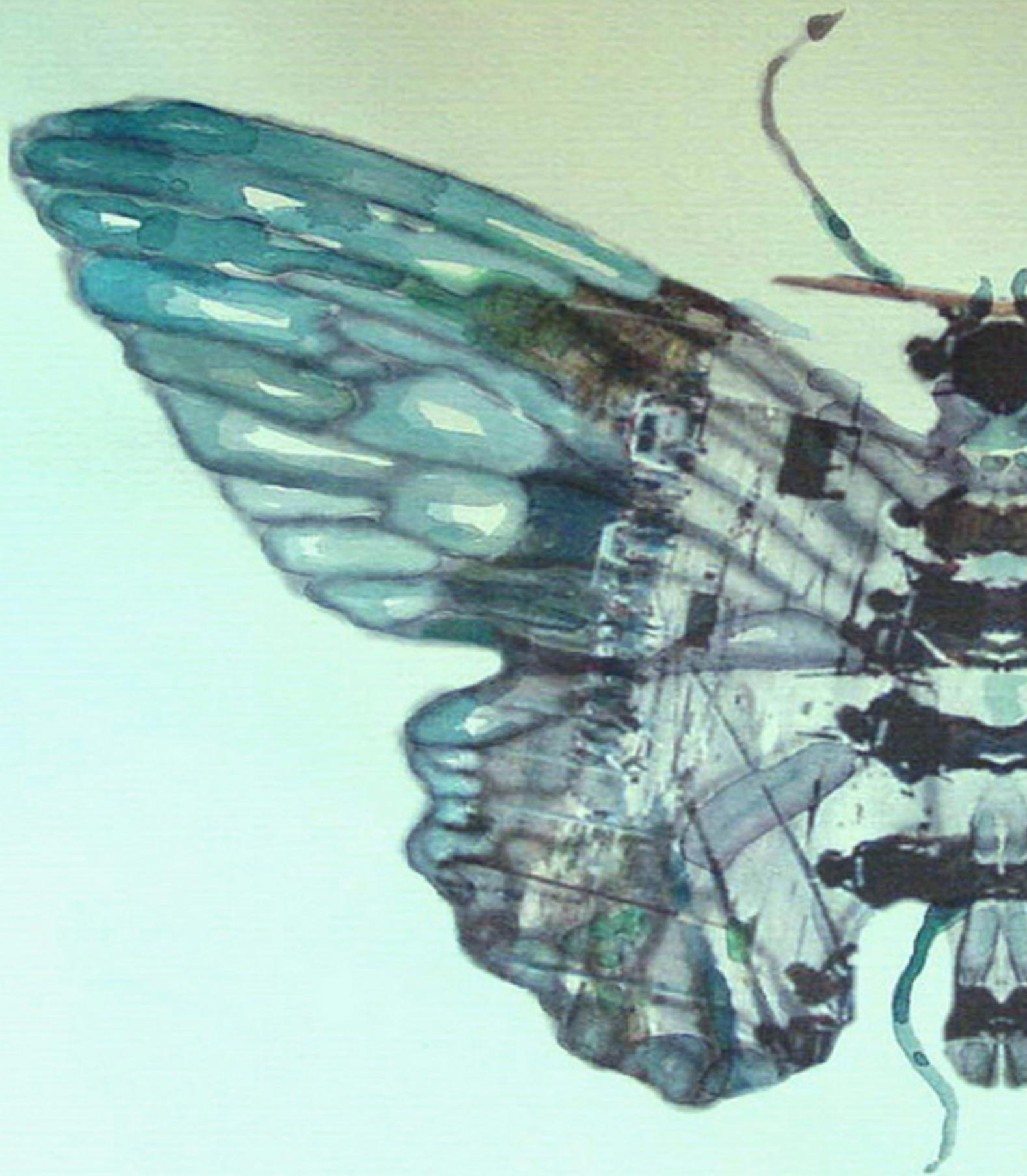


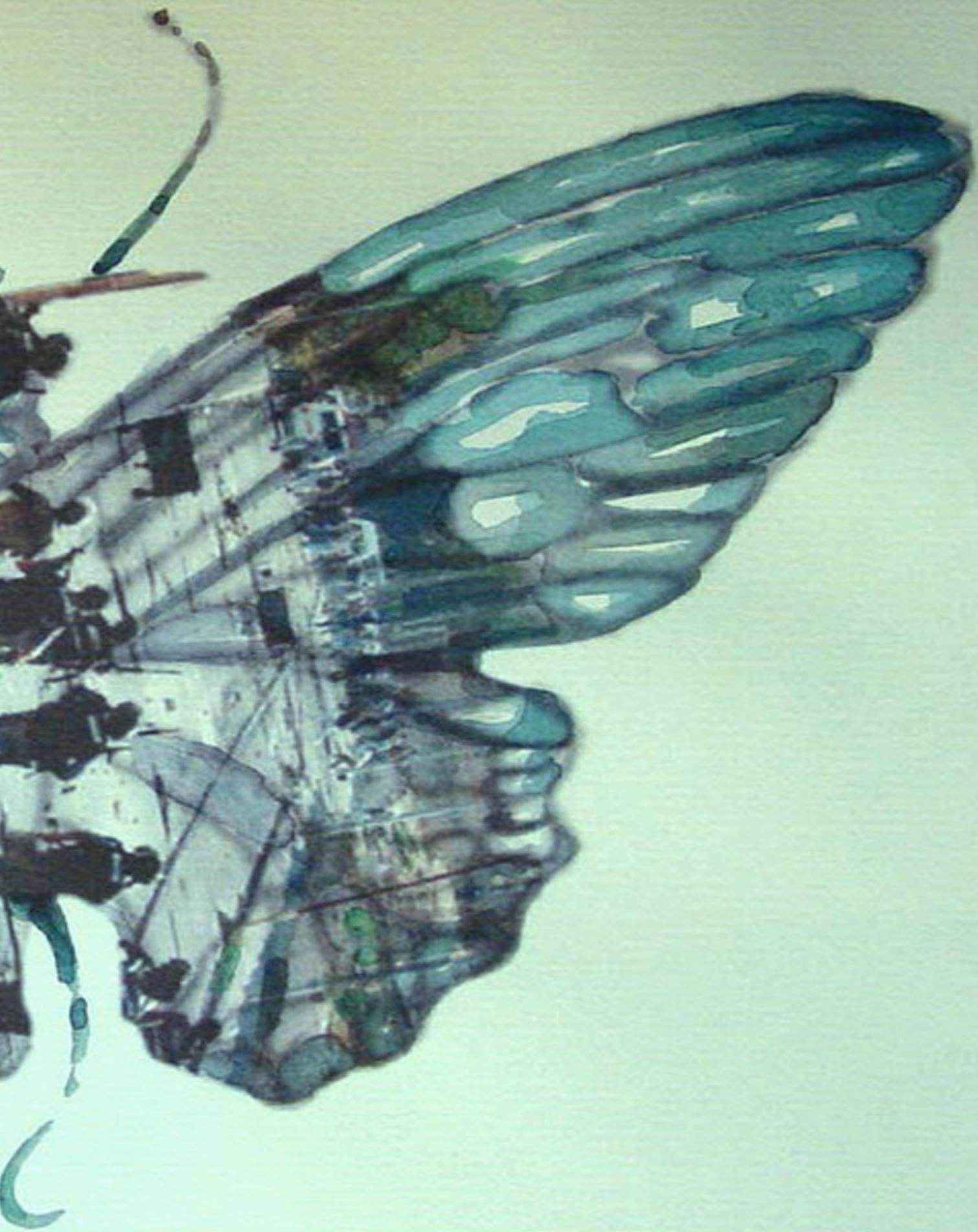
W & O

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MT







12 x 14". Watercolor and computer print of war image.

WARFLY 1

There is an Asian story that butterflies carry the souls of the dead to heaven. Early Native Americans believed that part of the human soul was captured in photographs. Combining these two ideas, I used media war images to create butterflies after having a dream in which human created patterns became so pervasive that butterflies started mimicking them. Could war images be turned into something beautiful? Dangerous thought. This is one of many butterflies I have designed using computer graphics then hand painting and drawing on the computer print. The butterfly's pattern is a digitally enhanced war image.

Open Clip Art Library



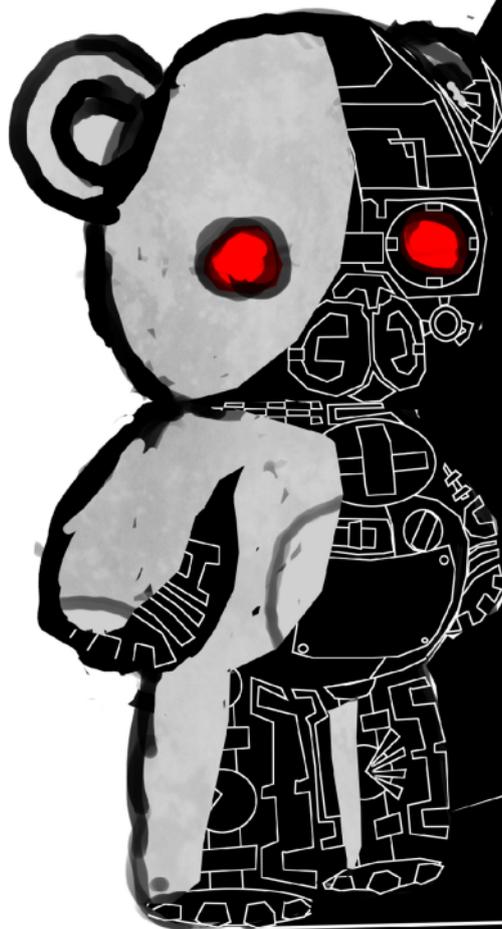
is Powered by

 **aiki** framework



Pete Meadows

Pete Meadows is a Montreal-based illustrator and musician. His illustration process heavily features GIMP, which he uses to create the angular, but organic line quality and transparency that you see on these pages.



- Bearbot 1
- Bearbot 2
- Bishops 1
- Mini buddy meets Gargantuar 1
- Kitty Bot 2





John LeMasney

John LeMasney is a designer, artist, writer, poet, technologist, open web advocate and open source evangelist.

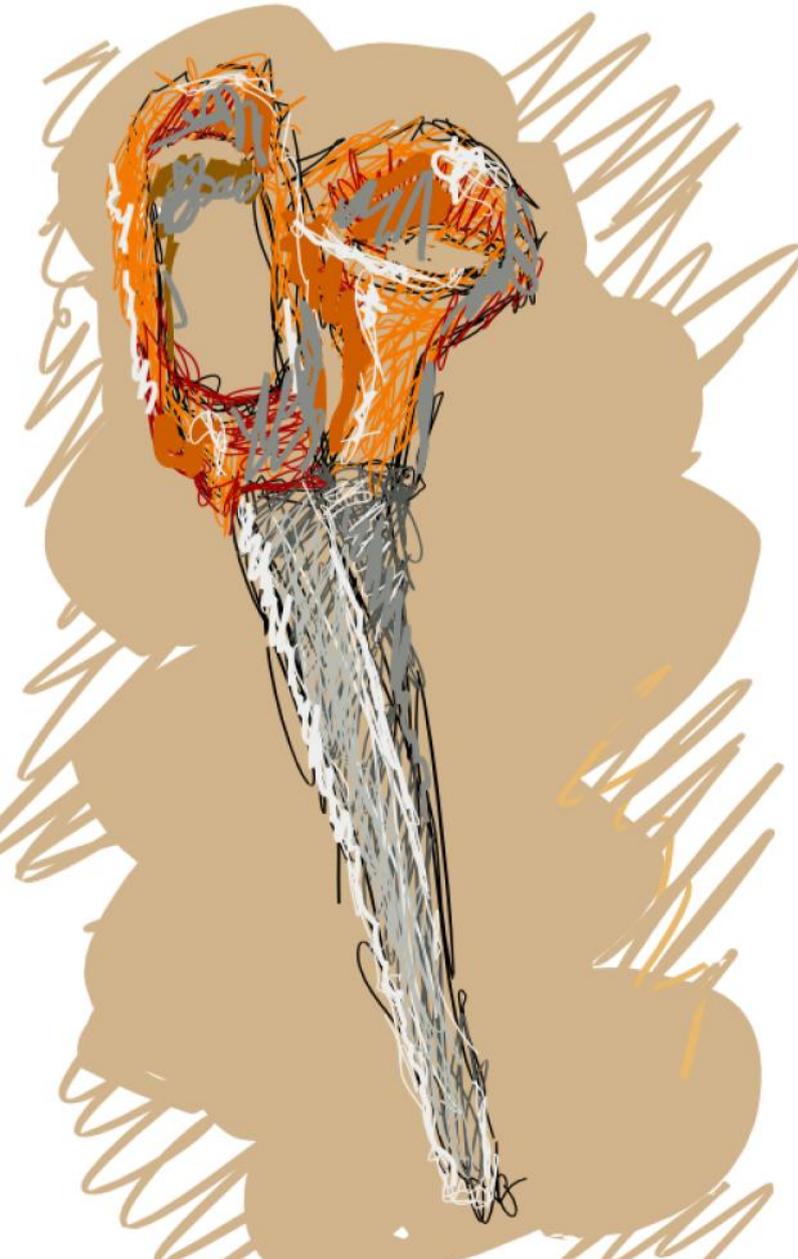
John started his project 365Sketches in January 2010. His goal was to produce one sketch per day using only Inkscape. He would then publish it in his blog <http://365sketches.org>, set up in Wordpress, under a CC-BY-SA license. The underlying purpose of John's daily exercise was to improve his skills using Inkscape but, as he told us, the result was deeper than that. In his own words:

I've created a daily reminder for myself and others of the power of open source. I've gathered a community of about 200 people who watch the project, about 20 real fans, and I've gotten a lot of design and consulting work. I've also made quite a few friends. I feel like I'm doing my part to help develop, advocate and advertise Inkscape.

John's plans are to go on with the project, drawing upon different tools: in 2011, GIMP would be the tool of choice, whereas Blender might be slated for 2012. In the following pages, you can see a small sample of John's work. To look through the whole project, do visit his blog.



potatoes gonna
POTATE
SO DON'T BE HATIN'
their potatin'





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Applying F/LOSS as a final user and not dying in the attempt

Lila Pagola

The artistic community of Córdoba first noticed F/LOSS in August 2003. There was an introductory talk about the philosophy of free software, given by Grulic, the local F/LOSS group. The talk was part of an art and technology event, the main topic of which was local initiatives merging technology and artistic practices.

That talk was a breath of fresh air for our little world which was exploring how net.art initiatives were going mainstream. For most people, the information in the talk remained just some ideas, with no effect on daily software tool use.

In 2004 many of us began some touristic trips to GNU/Linux. We discovered there were barriers of knowledge and practice preventing us from adopting it permanently. In March 2005, after an inspirational workshop given by Constant and Studio XX in Buenos Aires, the idea of creating a special project to help artists test and migrate to free software emerged.

The first step was a dedicated install party in May 2005. On that occasion, we provided and helped to install Mandrake GNU/Linux with some customised software packages specially selected by us and added to the distribution by Grulic. We also hosted some short demos by artists with software such as Blender, Audacity, and GIMP in order to present the general characteristics, possibilities, limitations and defining traits of these programs.

Knowing the importance of further support in the first experience, this step was continued and documented in a shared wiki, a mailing list and later, a blog. From the original 20 participants, less than half continued the regular use of free software. Some had serious problems with specific hardware support, such as video capture cards and professional sound cards. Others never got used to new interfaces, with the loss of expertise that comes with them. The commitment shown by Grulic, which created a kind of direct line to us, in order to solve problems and discuss doubts, was remarkable.

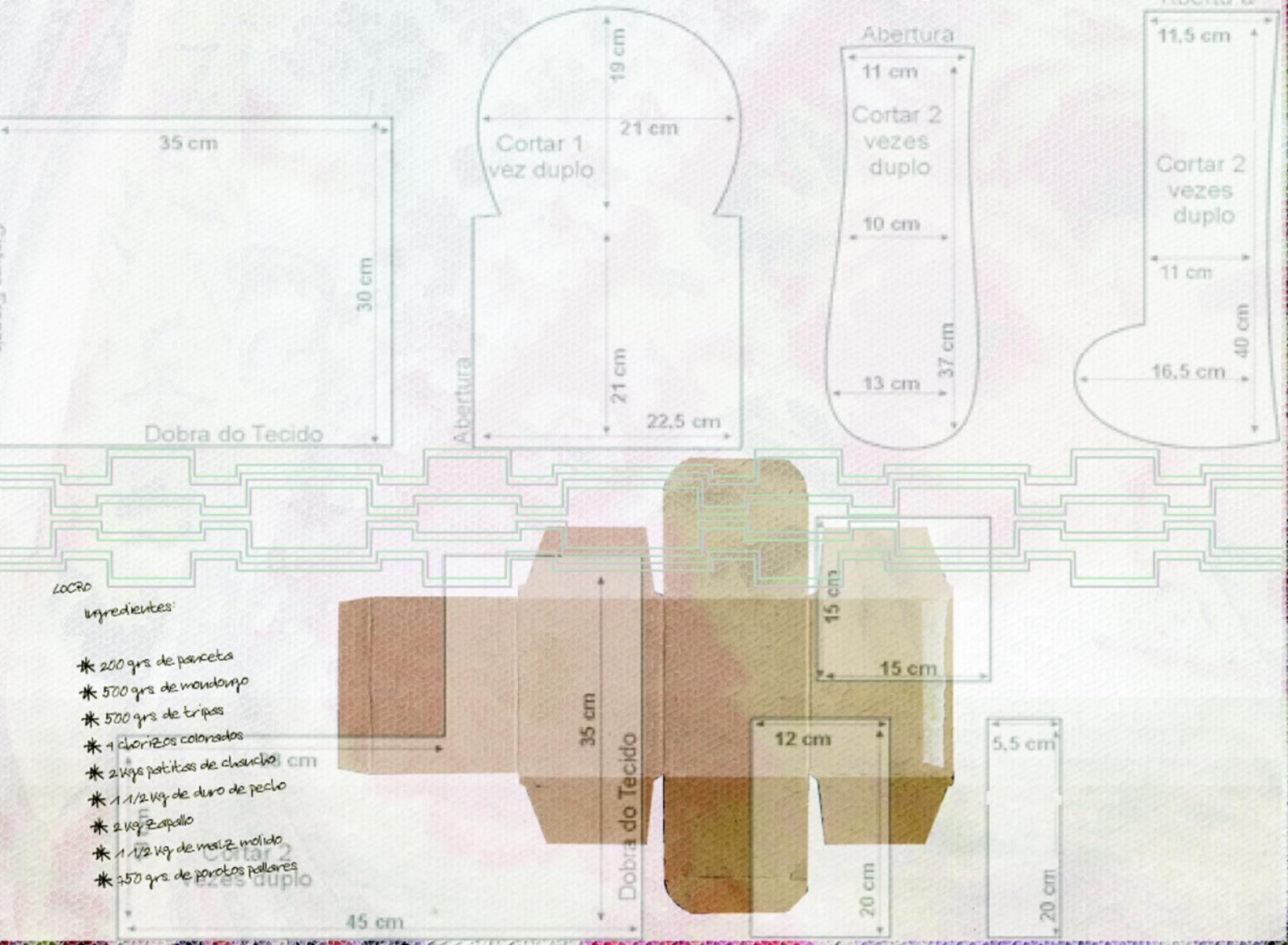
The Nómade project's other line of work was producing complete graphic design pieces with free software. Most of them were completed thanks to the good faith of the Via Libre foundation, an NGO devoted to spreading free software philosophy, as well as other local F/LOSS and free culture organisations in Argentina. So far, we've designed several books, posters, booklets and other pieces.

ABOUT THIS TEXT

This text is an adaptation of a talk presented at LGM 2010 in Brussels, Belgium. It shares the experience of some pieces of design (books, booklets, and brochures) completely made with F/LOSS by a team working in Córdoba, Argentina from 2005 to present (with many changes), called Nómade project.

The project emerged in a moment of growing interest in the Free Software philosophy among digital artists. Its main purposes are being an "interface between artists and [F]ree [S]oftware" and building actual ways to close the gap between theory and practice while providing support to "newbies" from the creative field. In other words, a proposal for evolving from affinity and theoretical discussions, to becoming users.

The project developed this basic idea through two lines of action: the first one was creating a platform for helping a special group of guest digital artists from different fields (musicians, animators, graphic designers, web designers, etc.) to encounter, test and migrate to F/LOSS alternatives while doing their routine tasks. The second was producing graphic design completely with free software.



The Context

The use of software in graphic design has a short history. It feels as if software appeared in the late eighties and began to be massively used in the early nineties.

Of course, there were only one or two very well known brands.

Later, when the first successful graphical user interfaces appeared for the PC, they came with lots of new software for drawing, post-production images, painting (maybe you remember the amazing /Painter/). We furiously installed and tested these programs. Artists and designers were living in heroic times, installing from 10 or more floppies, over the course of almost an hour. And we were so proud of our machines with 65,000 colours.

Those were times of intense experimentation. We experienced daily discoveries and improvements, as well as heavy battles for standards. In the late 90s, some stability was achieved. That stability meant the end of some experimentation, the definition of right ways of doing things, and also the standardisation of some options - those related to apps and file formats, for instance. These became not just the preferable or the better formats, but the only usable ones.

This was the case until F/LOSS arrived on the design horizon. For many designers, F/LOSS was not much more than a curiosity, meant for amateurs, or even a solution for young and poor beginners.

This context has had, until now, two main contributors: education and the market. In Argentina, education is the determinant for further professional practice. As in other fields, the first pedagogical approaches to digital tools were very instrumental. Whole lessons -and even syllabi- were built around a specific software, with absurdly detailed "step by step" guides for a tool in constant change. Of course, the tool chosen was "the only one," well known and preferred in the actual market.

Why choose F/LOSS in that context?

For the Nómade project, the option for free software is about aligning poetics and politics, form and content. It is a way of being consistent with the topics communicated by the pieces we design. We use free software and culture as actions against monopolies, patents, DRM, etc.

At the same time, the experience became a live example of viable alternatives to prohibitive and/or illegal software for

graphic design. We began the discussion around which software we use in professional practice and which software we teach in design schools.

Choosing F/LOSS was also a way to escape the pressure of productivity and market determining times, regimes and “right” ways of doing. It represents a possibility of reinstalling experimentation as procedure and criticism on the politics behind tools. Of course, the F/LOSS model promotes the debate about circulation of culture and authorship.

One Work-flow

By the end of 2006, when we began the first big project -the book *Artificial monopolies on intangible goods*. We made a bet. None of us actually knew if we would be able to finish the book using only F/LOSS, or how acceptable the results would be.

There were some critical known aspects to explore, such as 4-colour output and colour management and others to test, like the actual compatibility of the generated output files in a common production process. With the first book, we gained experience about how to manage a better work-flow for preventing mistakes and countless reviews.

The first problem appeared around fonts and their installation. Because we were newbies in Ubuntu, but used to installing and uninstalling fonts visually, it was tough to venture into the command line.

In my personal case, as a former QuarkXpress user, I began to work with Scribus. After using it for some hours, the work-flows became clear in their rough aspects. Maybe the most critical was the problem of footnotes. Having started from original texts in OpenOffice, with styles and notes at the bottom of the page, we quickly discovered incompatibilities between the two programs. Styles were imported by Scribus in a very messy way and when we saved the original .odt files as plain text, we lost parts of sentences. In order to solve this, the original texts were formatted again, setting notes at the end of the text, as a way to easily separate them from the main text. After that, footnotes were designed manually.

The next challenge was dealing with the Random Access Memory (RAM) that Scribus consumes with files bigger than 30 pages. The book had 130 pages. Our plan was to include all content in only one file for ease in using functions such as the dynamic table of contents, the same master pages, etc. But we quickly discovered, after passing 40 or 50 pages, that the text editor began to work very slowly. So, we decided to divide the book into five sections and put it all together, for the web version of the book, with pdftk.

For the third book, the editors decided to use a wiki ([https://wiki.vialibre.org.ar/moinmoin/vialibre/Publicaciones/Vo toElectronico](https://wiki.vialibre.org.ar/moinmoin/vialibre/Publicaciones/Vo%20toElectronico)) instead of originals in .odt. It was a better solution with regard to text styles and footnote management, but it generated a new problem: while on a wiki, changes were made directly there during a much longer period.

Printing process issues

We considered it a great advantage to have a friend in charge of the printing process, as we were interested in experimenting with new ways of doing this work. His patience and help were invaluable: he was a kind of bridge with people in pre-press and a backup for problems that, of course, occurred.

The first book was also an ambitious design. Pages were printed in two colours, and the originals for each colour were made directly by the printer from the Scribus file, opened in a Microsoft Windows system (although the book was designed under Ubuntu). Then we discovered the first problem: some fonts were interpreted by MS Windows with a slight difference in metrics, and some parts of the design were misplaced. So, we had to check and manually correct every page again.

The cover was done with Inkscape, GIMP and converted to CMYK mode with Krita. The first challenge here was to create a file with vectorial quality for drawings and typos and without colour differences between the raster images. Here, we faced some problems around the PDF output made from Inkscape, including a raster image with an alpha channel. We had to change the strategy, integrating all the vectorial background, except illustrations with raster images, eliminating the transparency.

The next question to solve was to find out which output would be best accepted by the pre-press company. We exported EPS, PDF and even an Adobe Illustrator files in order to deal with any incompatibility. The first time, the EPS was the “winner” because the people in pre-press preferred to open our original and manually set the resolution of vectors.





From this first experience, we have repeated the process with a few variations. The second book was designed in Córdoba, but printed in Costa Rica by someone who didn't even know what software we were using. We decided not to tell the printer because of distance, and because we didn't talk directly to him, but only to our client.

From doing to teaching

This practical experience, using free software for design under normal conditions of production, has been a useful point for introducing the same software in design and photography classrooms. Actual designs done are a kind of backup for overcoming the first reaction of students and colleagues confronting the possibility of using free software in the actual field of visual communication.

However, there are some barriers that are important to consider when discussing the option of free software in learning design. In Argentina, pirated software is very easy and cheap to get and install, even - or especially - in public institutions. Faced with this reality, it is difficult to focus the discussion only on ethics or ideological positions. These theoretical debates tend to have no effect on the actual practices of students, teachers or professionals.

In the case of the photography school at which I work, free software was installed in 2005 in a very forced way, due to licensing problems. When this happened, the minimal discussion teachers were able to have around the tools we use (and teach) led us to this unacceptable analogy: using just one brand and version of software in digital photography classes is like teaching about exposure techniques with just one brand and model of camera. For the camera, this would be considered clearly unacceptable and non-ethical for both teachers and students. However, using just one brand and version of software is a common practice and even one preferred by many.

So, ideological positions plus proofs of efficiency are needed for opening the debate, but are not enough. Tools are not neutral, and probably will be always a field of political negotiation in terms of distribution, possibilities of improvement and customisation.

On the one hand, we need to go back to the attitude of the early times of intense experimentation, when designers explored, tested and rated software without any external pressures (such as using certain software because it is a synonym for "professional").

And, on the other hand, scholar communities should deeply analyse their practices on software teaching and learning. Both teachers and students should promote critical approaches and capabilities to adaptation and flexibility in who learns, instead of creating captive users with no social awareness.

How can final users collaborate with developers?

Perhaps the most critical point is how to build bridges between users (students and designers) and developers so we can balance and improve the tools for everyone. Most people don't know that communities around applications exist, and that it's possible to participate. This is the very first task necessary among teachers and students.

But I believe designers and students should be involved in a more direct way. They should be stimulated to test, compare, discuss, and modify developments, and probably the best person to do that is the teacher. In many cases, it's just a matter of time and dissemination of information: as in other great initiatives of free culture, often the point is not disagreement or lack of interest, it's just ignorance on why and how to do it. Concrete environments and ways of participation where the added skills of everyone can make the difference.

<http://www.nomade.org.ar/sitio>

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Visual literacy : knowing through images

Eric Schrijver

The experience of our own time is mediated through images, but we tend to represent the past in a verbal-discursive way¹. That means the model of the history book, with its emphasis on words and stories. In its attempts at establishing a reliable reputation, a resource like Wikipedia exhibits an extremely conservative take on representing knowledge²: an image that goes along with an article is never more than an illustration in the literal sense of the word.

This why all the images we know of child labour show unhappy children: these pictures have been selected to fit to our story of the condemnation and subsequent abolition of child labour.

But when browsing through contemporary image archives, you will find most images show smiling children. This makes perfect sense: a photographer's visit is a special and exciting occasion.

It's the shock we get when confronted with these images that suddenly makes it possible for us to relate to our past. By freeing the image from its iconic role, we can stop seeing what's depicted as nothing but logical steps in a larger story. We can identify, both with the children who are depicted and with the photographer taking the picture.

1. **Wikipedia, the deeply conservative and traditional encyclopedia**, All The Modern Things, 2008 <http://brianna.modernthings.org/article/147/wikipedia-the-deeply-conservative-and-traditional-encyclopedia>

2. **Interactieive presentatie handschriften** Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum, 2003 <http://collecties.meermannomuseum.nl/handschriften/>.





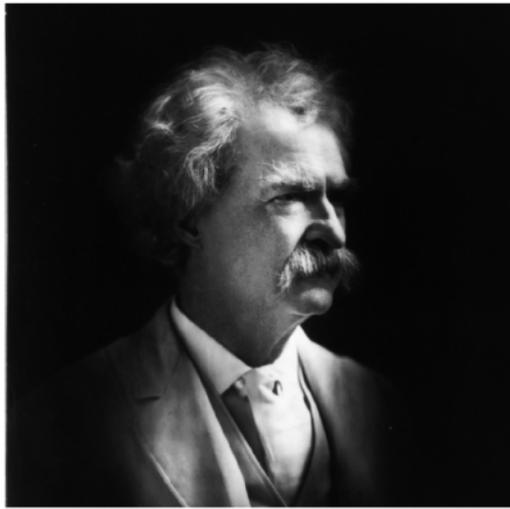
In the pictures taken for the American National Child Labor Committee, most depicted children look happy.



Our archives house many photographs of Hitler, and he smiles in most of them.

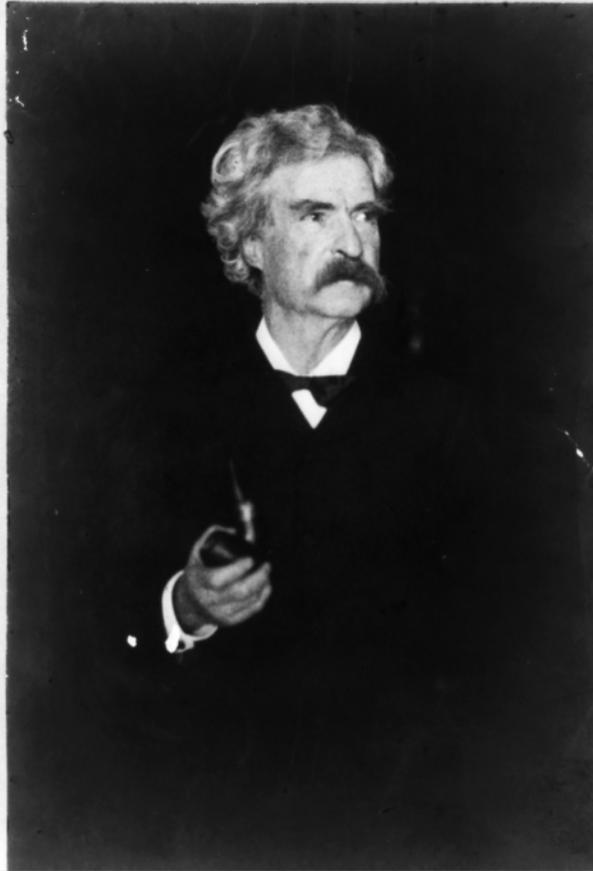


Mr. TWAINE



THE GREY HAIR IS AN
ACCIDENT OF THE
MOST TRIVIAL. HE IS
QUITE YOUNG.

TEXT: RUDYARD KIPLING PHOTOGRAPHY: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



You are a contemptible lot, over yonder. Some of you are Commissioners, and some Lieutenant-Governors, and some have the V. C., and a few are privileged to walk about the Mall arm in arm with the Viceroy; but I have seen Mark Twain this golden morning, have shaken his hand, and smoked a cigar—no, two cigars—with him, and talked with him for more than two hours! Understand clearly that I do not despise you; indeed, I don't. I am only very sorry for you, from the Viceroy downward. To soothe your envy and to prove that I still regard you as my equals, I will tell you all about it. They said in Buffalo that he was in Hartford, Conn.; and again they said "perchance he is gone upon a journey to Port-land"; and a big, fat drummer vowed that he knew the great man intimately, and that Mark was



spending the summer in Europe—which information so upset me that I embarked upon the wrong train, and was incontinently turned out by the conductor three-quarters of a mile from the station, amid the wilderness of railway tracks. Have you ever, encumbered with great-coat and valise, tried to dodge diversely-minded locomotives when the sun was shining in your eyes? But I forgot that you have not seen Mark Twain, in your people of no account! Saved

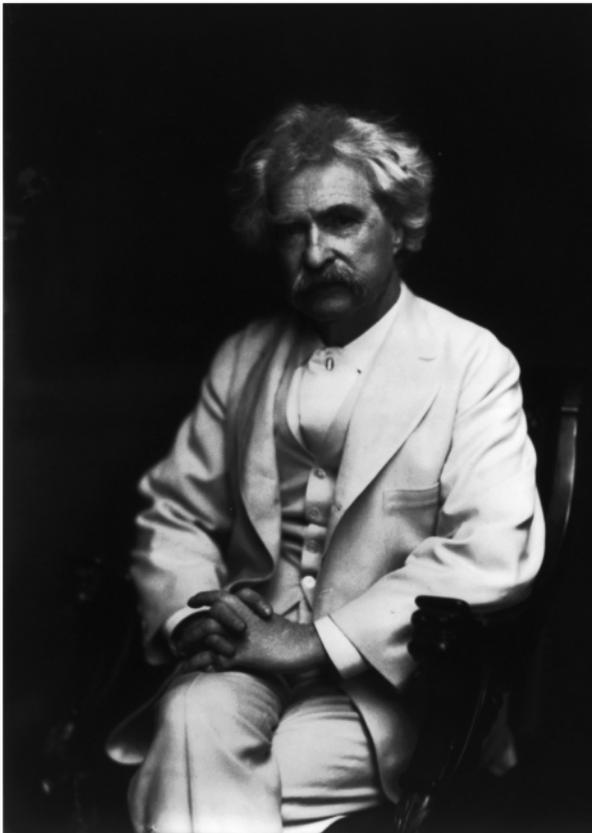
from the jaws of the cowcatcher, me wandering devious a stranger met." Elmira is the place. Elmira in the State of New York—this State, not two hundred miles away," and he added, perfectly unnecessarily, "Slide, Kelley, slide." I slid on the West Shore line, I slid till midnight, and they dumped me down at the door of a frowzy hotel in Elmira. Yes, they knew all about "that man Clemens," but reckoned he was not in town; had gone East somewhere. I had better possess my soul in patience till the morrow, and then dig up



the "man Clemens" brother-in-law, who was interested in coal. The idea of chasing half a dozen relatives in addition to Mark Twain up and down a city of thirty thousand inhabitants kept me awake. Morning revealed Elmira, whose streets were desolated by railway tracks, and whose suburbs were given up to the manufacture of door-sashes and window-frames. It was surrounded by pleasant, fat, little hills, rimmed with timber and topped with cultivation. The Chemung River flowed generally up and down the town, and had just finished flooding a few of the main streets. The hotel-man and the telephoman assured me that the much-desired brother-in-law was out of town, and no one seemed to know where "the man Clemens" abode. Later on I discov-

"Copyright?"
Some men have morals, and some men have—other things."

ered that he had not summered in that place for more than nineteen seasons, and so was comparatively a new arrival. A friendly policeman volunteered the news that he had seen Twain or "some one very like him" driving a buggy the day before. This gave me a delightful sense of nearness. Fancy living in a town where you could see the author of Tom Sawyer, or "some one very like him," jolting over the pavements in a buggy! "He lives out yonder at East Hill," said the policeman; "three miles from here." Then the chase began—in a hired hack, up an awful hill, where sunflowers blossomed by the roadside, and crops waved, and Harper's Magazine cows stood in eligible and commanding attitudes knee-deep in clover, all ready to be transferred to photogravure.



The great man must have been persecuted by outsiders aforetime, and fled up the hill for refuge. Presently the driver stopped at a miserable, little, white wood shanty, and demanded "Mister Clemens." "I know he's a big-bug and all that," he explained, "but you can never tell what sort of notions those sort of men take into their heads as live in, anyways." There rose up a young lady who was sketching thistle-tops and goldenrod, amid a plentiful supply of both, and set the pilgrimage on the right path. "It's a pretty Gothic house on the left-hand side a little way farther on." "Gothic house," said the driver. "Very few of the city hacks take this drive, specially if they know they are coming out here," and he glared at me savagely. It was a very pretty house, anything but Gothic, clothed with ivy, standing in a



very big compound, and fronted by a verandah full of chairs and hammocks. The roof of the verandah was a trellis-work of creepers, and the sun peeping through moved on the shining boards below. Decidedly this remote place was an ideal one for work, if a man could work among these soft airs and the murmur of the long-eared crops. Appeared suddenly a lady used to dealing with rampagous outsiders. "Mr. Clemens has just walked downtown. He is at his broth-

er-in-law's house." Then he was within shouting distance, after all, and the chase had not been in vain. With speed I fled, and the driver, skidding the wheel and swearing audibly, arrived at the bottom of that hill without accidents. It was in the pause that followed between ringing the brother-in-law's bell and getting an answer that it occurred to me for the first time Mark Twain might possibly have other engagements than the entertainment of escaped lunatics from India, be they never so full of admiration. And in another man's



house—anyhow, what had I come to do or say? Suppose the drawing-room should be full of people,—suppose a baby were sick, how was I to explain that I only wanted to shake hands with him? Then things happened somewhat in this order. A big, dark-ened drawing-room; a huge chair; a man with eyes, a mane of grizzled hair, a brown mustache covering a mouth as delicate as a woman's, a strong, square hand shaking mine, and the slowest, calmest, levellest voice in all the world saying—"Well, you think you owe me something, and you've come to tell me so. That's what I call squaring a debt handsomely." "Piff!" from a cob-pipe (I always said that a Missouri meer-schaum was the best smoking in the world), and, behold! Mark Twain had curled himself up in the big

armchair, and I was smoking reverently, as befits one in the presence of his superior. The thing that struck me first was that he was an elderly man, yet, after a minute's thought, I perceived that it was otherwise, and in five minutes, the eyes looking at me, I saw that the grey hair was an accident of the most trivial. He was quite young. I was shaking his hand. I was smoking his cigar, and I was hearing him talk—this man I had learned to love and admire fourteen thousand miles away. Reading his books, I had striven to get an idea of his personality, and all my preconceived notions were wrong and beneath the reality. Blessed is the man who finds no disillusion when he is brought face to face with a revered writer. That was a moment to be remembered. The landing of a twelve-pound salmon was nothing to it.

THE GREY HAIR IS AN ACCIDENT OF THE MOST TRIVIAL. HE IS QUITE YOUNG. TEXT: RUDYARD KIPLING. PHOTOGRAPHS: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

3. Inspired by spreads from Fantastic Man <http://www.fantasticmanmagazine.com>

When you see his picture on the back of a book, Mark Twain is a long dead writer. When you see the whole series, you see he was a super star.³

MODERN
NO BORDERS

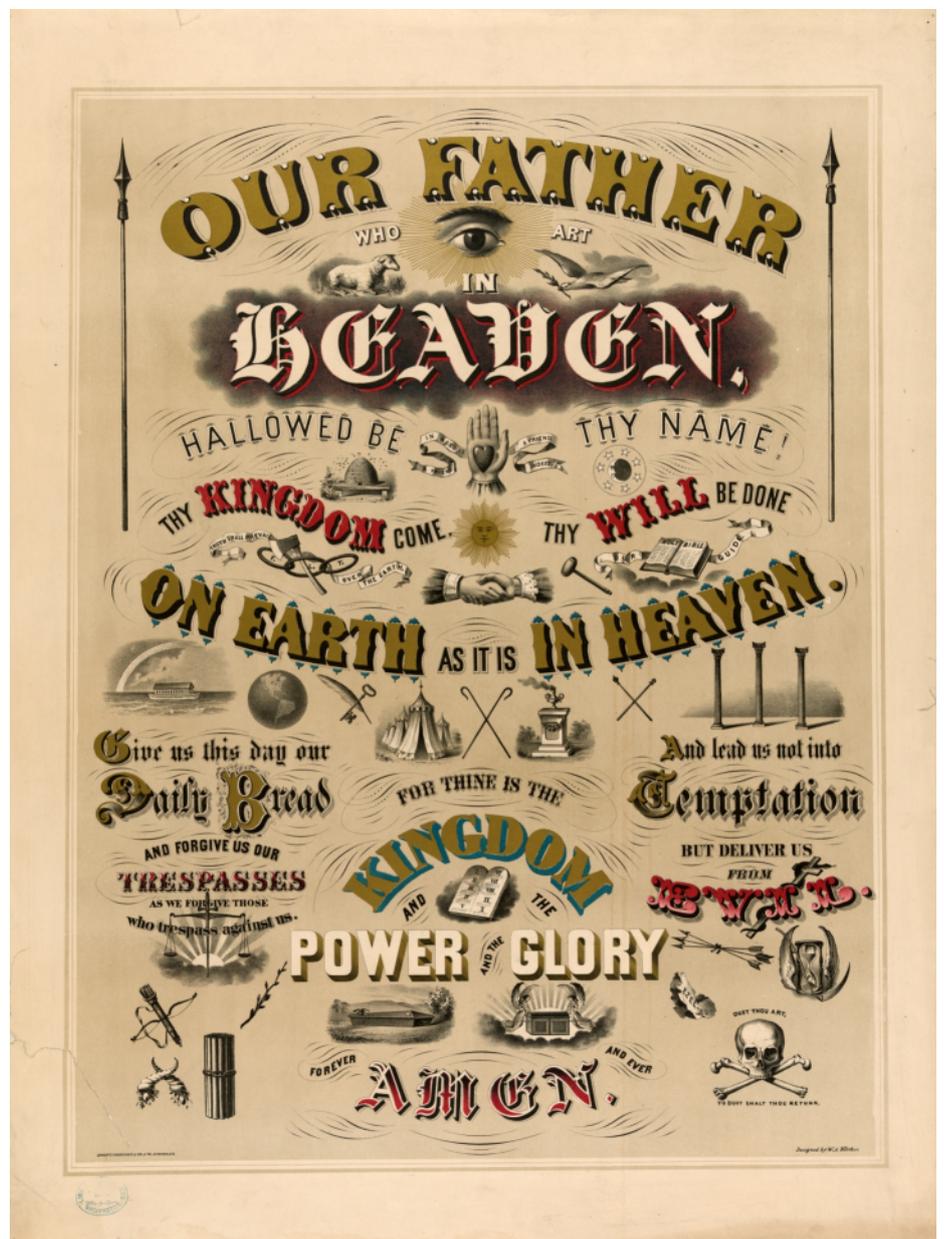
USEFUL
PRINTINGS

TORN
HOMINY

Grotesk typefaces like Helvetica did not start out with the 'neutrality' imparted on them by the Swiss design school—they were whimsical display fonts.

Forms we employ for ironic effect did not start out that way.

All these are examples of how 'reading' the images from the past can show us how our own perception and norms have changed since then, allowing us to better understand both past and present.





Interview with Ben Laenen of DejaVu

ginger coons interviews Ben Laenen

Ben Laenen is a maintainer and developer of DejaVu, the widely used but not often mentioned interface font.

Ben Laenen: My first action on DejaVu was drawing Greek glyphs which was actually a huge project in retrospect. I was naive at the time. I thought "oh, let's draw a lot of glyphs quickly and it'll work out." But actually, [the DejaVu community] weren't that harsh on me so the first glyphs immediately got in.

ginger coons: *For all of this, you use FontForge, right?*

Yes.

Your first experience with FontForge: how was it?

I know what you want me to say: It's ugly! That's basically the first thing everyone thinks when they open FontForge. It's not really appealing to many people. Afterwards, we learned from George Williams [developer of FontForge] that he doesn't really care about the looks of FontForge. I think the bad looks are [meant] to scare away people who aren't really serious about it. So you have to be serious about it or you won't go on with it.

Had you been using DejaVu beforehand?

I can't remember about that, actually, if I used it. I think I was using Bitstream Vera at the time. And I wanted to have Greek glyphs in that style, but there weren't any. So I was Googling around, and then came upon DejaVu. I mean, at the time, the default font for most Linux distributions was Bitstream Vera, because DejaVu wasn't big yet. So, Googling around, I found DejaVu, that they were a project making new glyphs for Bitstream Vera, so I entered into it and...

So wait. Why did you want to do Greek in the first place? What did you need the Greek for?

I've always loved Greek. I did Greek at school, old Greek, but I wanted to learn a little bit of new Greek. I just find it a nice alphabet. And I was trying to learn it a bit by moving the interface of my computer. Instead of English, which I'm used to, I wanted to have it all in Greek one day. Just try it out, see if it could work.

Have you managed that yet?

I actually managed to do that for a few months, then I said "Let's go back to English again."

Were you using Deja Vu for your system font when you did that?

Not at the start. I had to first draw the glyphs, of course. But after a few months, then I switched my interface to Greek.

Your interface was in Greek...

Using my own font. Actually, drawing a font was something that goes many years before that. But nothing came from it, really.

What was that?

I was just thinking about it today. Actually, a font should be quite easy. You just draw one glyph and then you can use it in the entire text, the same glyph. That's my first idea of making a font. But I wasn't really serious the first years.

So how long ago was that?

I think ten years.

Ten years before you started on Deja Vu?

Yeah.

So you've been thinking about it for a long time.

Yeah. It used to be at a time when you had bitmap fonts. That was pretty easy, you just click some pixels and then you have a font, pretty easy.

Did you ever do one of those, or no?

Not really. If you really go back in time, I was using QBasic. I think that's more than ten years. I actually made a program

which drew its own glyphs and I had to, in QBasic, really make arrays of all the letters to put on the screen.

That's dedication.

I even had sort of vectorised fonts by drawing the lines, but just by coordinates.

Like choppy vectors.

Basically, just glyphs were drawn as polygons, not filled in but just straight lines. And that made a letter.

Fifteen years ago, or more, that's not bad.

Yeah, and a very old computer. It wasn't very fast, either.

Early 90s, right?

I think yeah. But I mean that's nostalgia. I think it's a recurring theme, actually. If you really go back to it. And now... When Deja Vu came in, the real fonts business really started for me.

What's the uptake been on Deja Vu since five years ago, when you started on it?

Well, the first years were pretty intense because lots of glyphs were added at the time. We became default font in a lot of distributions [of GNU/Linux]. So the first years were pretty busy. Had a lot of contact with the maintainers from distributions, who really pushed it. So that made DejaVu the default font. The last few years, it's slowed down a bit. We are stabilising.

How long had Deja Vu been going before you started on it?

I think a year or so. It started with Štěpán Roh... He's from [the Czech Republic] so he needed a few more glyphs that weren't in Bitstream Vera. So he started with that. It was pretty slow before [Denis Jacquere and I] entered the project but I came with Greek, Denis came with a lot of glyphs needed for African languages which included the International Phonetic Alphabet, for example. [The International Phonetic Alphabet is] not really all needed, but it came with it, almost. Afterwards, Cyrillic, I think Cyrillic came into it. Later, Arabic and Armenian... We have Georgian, which was made by a former Prime Minister of Georgia.

What?! Really?

Who lives in exile in Finland.

And he made the Georgian set for DejaVu?

Yeah.

That's incredible.

That's one of our weirdest contributors. Besarion Gugushvili.

If the previous system font in most distros was Bitstream Vera, or Bitstream Vera Sans...

Bitstream Vera Sans was the font used in the interface.

So, if it didn't have all these international glyphs, have you guys made localisation an easier thing?

This is why people from distributions were pushing to get DejaVu instead of Bitstream Vera. Because if you couldn't even use Bitstream Vera in most eastern European countries, then you have a big problem if you want to see Linux taking off over there. And there weren't really a lot of alternatives. We were the first real font that could be used on screen as an interface font which had those glyphs. So there wasn't really much choice.

Have any competitors to DejaVu sprung up?

Not really. There were a lot of Vera derivatives which were trying to do the same. Štěpán Roh was actually quite clever because he basically ported all those glyphs from the other fonts and tried to get them in DejaVu. So we ended up with the most complete set of glyphs. And we became a little community around the font, which also helped. The other derivatives were missing the community. It was basically one person doing the work.

Have your work habits, your toolchain, your workflow, your process, changed at all in the last five years of working on Deja Vu?

We're still using FontForge and the build scripts have changed a little, but that's not really important. I mean, it just made it a little bit easier for us. Instead of using a Python script you could just use a makefile. Doesn't really make it a lot easier. It's a little bit easier for maintenance.

So you're basically doing the same thing that you did, work-wise, five years ago, when you started?

Making the font itself... Basically, you become better at it, of course. But the tools are the same.

From your first faux-vector type in Basic up until now, you've come a very long way.

Yeah. I didn't know anything about fonts at the time. I didn't look into trying to guess what font formats there were at the time. I just said "Hey, I want letters" and decided to make something. I had a lot of time to program all day. But that doesn't work if you have to do it properly. No one will use that font.

DejaVu Serif, Sans,

and Sans Mono

A B C D E F G H I J K L M

n o p q r s t u v w x y z

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ([{ + - * ÷ }])

À Ç Ð Æ Ħ Ñ Œ Û Ŵ Ŷ Ž Þ ß

ქართული დამწერლობა

dejavu: vu: fontz

Ελληνικά Кириллица + Σ Ξ Σ Ι ο Ϛ

already seen

Etaiion Shrdlu

So are there any secrets hiding in Deja Vu?

No. Unfortunately not. There's one nice glyph which tells you the point size of the rendering. Say it's displaying the number eight and you make the font bigger, it'll display ten or fifteen. Hinting magic. It helps a lot in debugging. Everyone defines their own point size. But their point size isn't the same as our point size. So just pick that glyph and it tells us what number it is. Then we know what we have to debug.

Most people don't notice the fonts. The font is good if no one notices it. When I drew the Arabic glyphs, for example, suddenly everyone noticed. So we knew it wasn't really that good.

If someone wants to contribute or make an improvement, what do they do?

They'd usually ask about it on the mailing list. But most people enter the project by just making a few glyphs beforehand and then just showing it in one go to us on the mailing list. A few weeks ago, someone came with ancient Italic glyphs. Italic, used 2000 years ago in Italy.

So have you incorporated Ancient Italic?

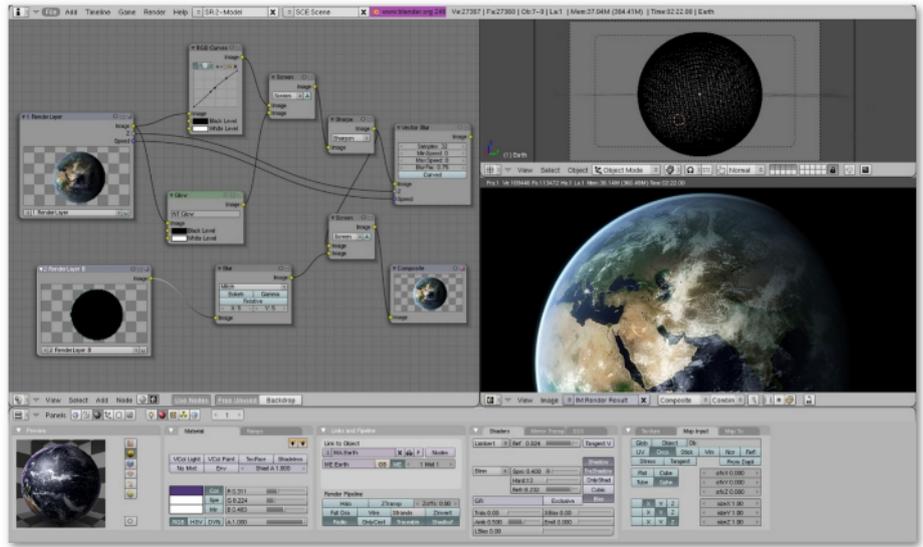
Not yet. He first made his alphabet and then put a patch on the mailing list, so we have to review that patch. Then we say "Oh, this can be improved" and he'll just work on it again.

I just said 'Hey, I want letters' and decided to make something.

Resource List

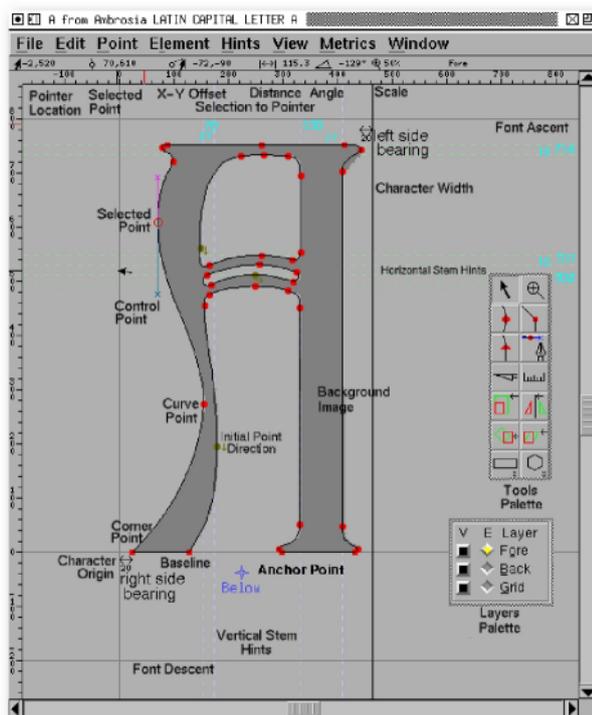
BLENDER

A powerful F/LOSS 3D animation application for GNU/Linux, Mac OS X and Microsoft Windows.



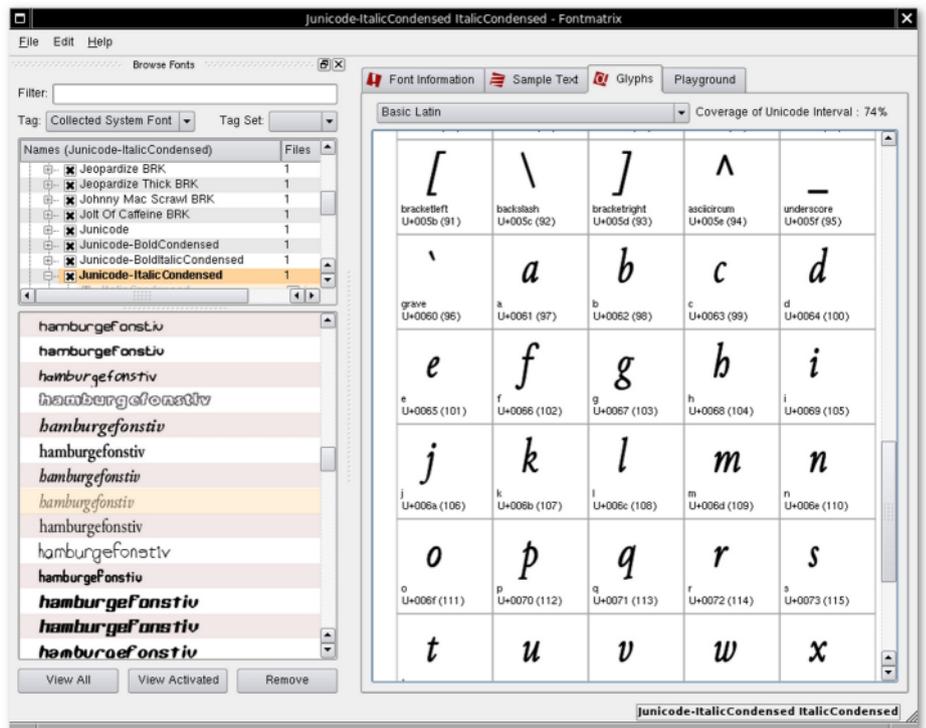
FONTFORGE

A F/LOSS font editor for GNU/Linux, Mac OS X and Microsoft Windows.



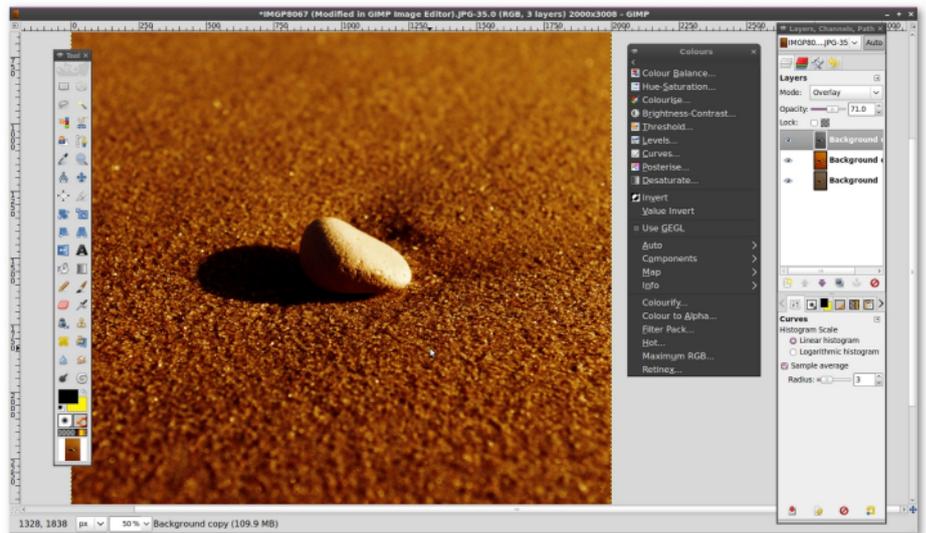
FONTMATRIX

A F/LOSS font management and selection tool for GNU/Linux, Mac OS X and Microsoft Windows.



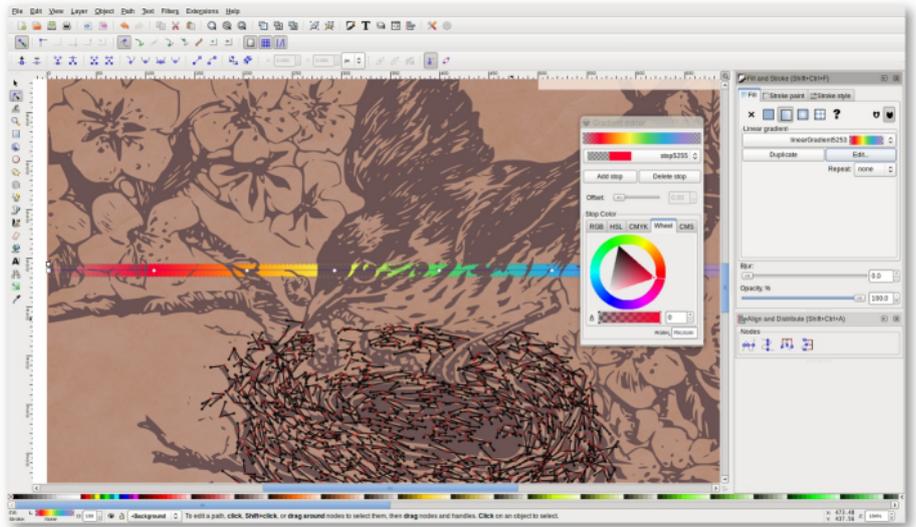
GIMP

A raster based image editor for GNU/Linux, Mac OS X and Microsoft Windows..



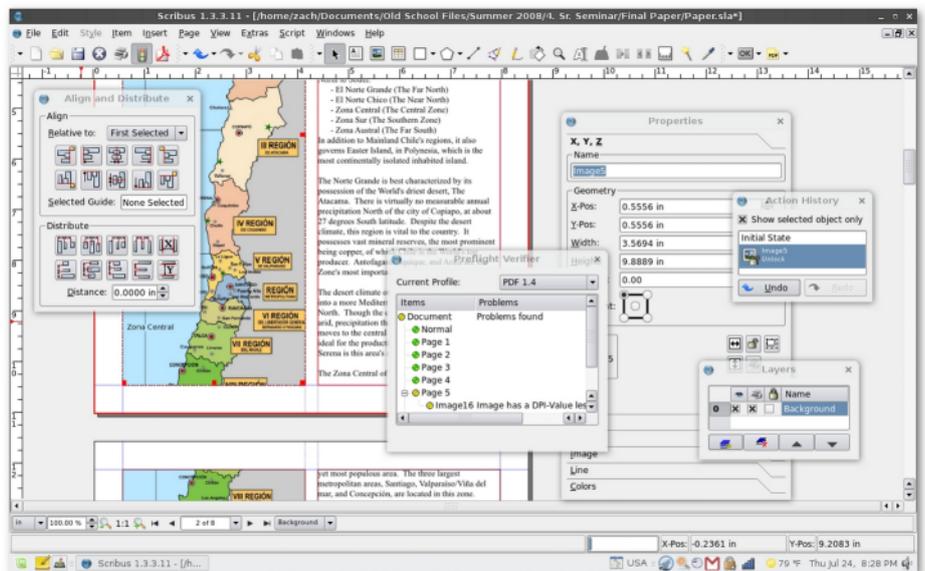
INKSCAPE

A vector graphics editor for GNU/Linux, Mac OS X and Microsoft Windows.



SCRIBUS

A desktop publishing software for GNU/Linux, Mac OS X and Microsoft Windows.



Glossary and resources 1.1

Audacity :

A F/LOSS sound editing application for GNU/Linux, Mac OS X and Microsoft Windows.

Bitstream Vera :

A typeface released under a permissive license, allowing modification.

Blender :

A powerful F/LOSS 3D animation application for GNU/Linux, Mac OS X and Microsoft Windows.

Command line :

A text only user interface, allowing users to input commands without the intervention of cursors and graphical user interfaces.

Constant :

An arts organization based in Brussels, Belgium. The parent organization of Open Source Publishing.

Distro/Distribution :

A specific configuration or "flavour" on GNU/Linux, often designed with a particular purpose in mind.

DRM (Digital Rights Management) :

Technologies (of whatever sort) which prevent users from making certain uses of the larger technologies to which the DRM is applied.

FontForge :

A F/LOSS font editor for GNU/Linux, Mac OS X and Microsoft Windows.

Fontmatrix :

A F/LOSS font management and selection tool for GNU/Linux, Mac OS X and Microsoft Windows.

Free :

As in freedom, or often, that which is or is of Free Software.

Free Software :

A term describing software which is made available under licenses permitting users to not only run it, but to examine its code, redistribute it and modify it.

GIMP :

A raster based image editor for GNU/Linux, Mac OS X and Microsoft Windows.

Inkscape :

A vector graphics editor for GNU/Linux, Mac OS X and Microsoft Windows.

Mailing list :

An email based forum through which subscribers may receive announcements, view or participate in discussion.

Mandrake :

A distribution of GNU/Linux. Now known as Mandriva.

OSP (Open Source Publishing) :

A graphic design collective which is dedicated to producing high quality work using F/LOSS tools.

PANOSE :

A typeface classification system first developed in the 1980s.

Qt :

Pronounced "cute." A F/LOSS development framework which functions across platforms and provides a common set of visual elements.

Repository :

A stored collection of software packages, from which those packages may be downloaded and installed.

Subversion :

A F/LOSS version control system for GNU/Linux, Mac OS X and Microsoft Windows.

Torvalds :

Linus Torvalds, the originator of Linux.

Ubuntu :

A particularly popular distribution of GNU/Linux, produced by Canonical Ltd.

Version control :

A means of managing changes (and allowing reversion) to a commonly held body of work, most often a software project.

vi :

A F/LOSS text editor developed in the 1970s and still in use. Available for GNU/Linux, Mac OS X and Microsoft Windows.

November

11, 12

.....
Your wonderful event.

22-26

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haven't heard of.

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8-10

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