

REIMAGING THE ARTIST BOOK FOR THE MOBILE AGE

by

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Generations of visual artists and designers created publications to express their views, increase their visibility, and promote their work. Often self-published, these works usually have limited distribution and contain a variety of content, often including a portfolio of the artist's work, theories on design and art, or collaborations with others. For much of the 20th century, these publications were printed – either in book form, magazine format or loose pages contained in a portfolio. With the recent rise in popularity of tablet-based mobile devices such as the iPad and Kindle, artists and designers may contemplate the potential of self-publishing for these devices. The swift adoption of electronic tablets such as the iPad was fueled by the rise in mobile Internet devices such as the smartphone during the last half of the 2000s. When Apple launched the iPad in 2010, analysts at Morgan Stanley predicted that by 2015, technology users would spend more time accessing the Internet via mobile devices than on desktop computers (O'Dell, 2010, paragraph 2). The rapid growth of publishing options available for mobile devices warrants the serious consideration of artists to determine if tablet-based publishing or “e-publishing” is a viable option for promoting and distributing their work.

This study will examine the potential of e-publishing for artists and designers to compare and contrast development for this media with more established media such as printed books and Web sites.

As design for tablet-based electronic devices and e-publications is still developing, design standards are still being established (Kilpatrick, 2012, 3:30). Designers can study other e-publications to develop a set of best practices to apply to their projects.

This study will review and critically evaluate a selection of e-publications—e-books, electronic versions of printed magazines, and mobile applications, or “apps” to identify effective design elements. The study will guide the reader through the process of designing a new e-publication, based on the book *Recontextualized: Ordered Layers* by Michelle Hays and Randall Reid (2008). This section will compare and contrast the design decision processes for printed media and e-publications. The author will endeavor to determine if established principles in print, multimedia, and interactive design are relevant and adaptable to the new media. This study will attempt to answer several questions. In what way does designing e-publications differ from designing printed publications? Is e-publishing a viable option for visual artists to reach and connect with their audiences? Which technologies and formats (i.e., EPUB, enhanced PDF, tablet readers, stand-alone apps) work best for presenting the work of a visual artist in an e-publication? Will this new media demand that designers abandon long-established design principles established for the creation of printed books? That is one of the questions this study seeks to answer.

CHAPTER II. APPLICATION OF THE DESIGN PROCESS TO A NEW MEDIA

Designers have developed and refined procedures for helping them work through the design process. In *Managing the Design Process* (2010), design management consultant and author Terry Lee Stone details a nine-step process under four general categories: discover, design, develop, and deliver (pp. 10–11). Eric Karjaluoto (2014), founding partner at smashLAB, a Vancouver-based strategic interactive agency, details a process in four major phases: discovery, planning, creative, and application (pp. 104–105.) (See Figure 1). Either of these processes can be applied to guide the designer through the steps of designing for any media. Each of the four major steps in Karjaluoto's process can be applied to designing books in either printed or electronic presentation. As can be seen by applying Karjaluoto's process, there are many similar characteristics of the creation of e-publications with those of other, more traditional communication design projects. As detailed in this paper, the application of these steps varies depending on the media, but the primary goals of each step remain the same.

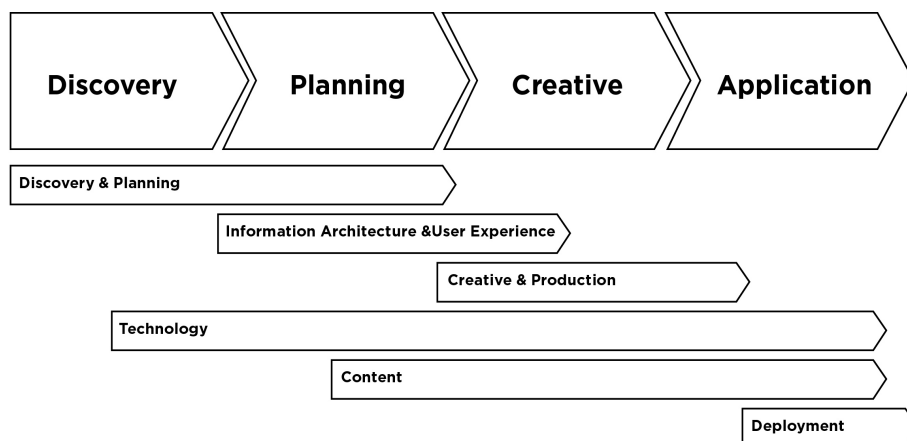


Figure 1. Karjaluoto's design process, redrawn from Karjaluoto, 2014, p. 106

This study focused primarily on the first three phases: discovery, planning, and creative. For an e-publication, the application phase involves the publication of the e-book by making it available for download via the artist's Web site or third-party vendors such as Apple's App store and Amazon.com. As Karjaluoto explains, the creative process for communication design is rarely strictly sequential and requires a designer to move back and forth among steps:

Although Discovery starts the process, you never stop learning about your clients and their needs. Planning, too, is most exhaustive at the beginning of projects, but you'll continue to plan smaller points throughout your project. The Creative and Application stages involve a cyclical set of tasks: You'll hatch ideas, develop prototypes, run iterations, test your approach, and refine your design. ... Although the overlapping aspects of these stages may turn out to be murkier than you like, design isn't that absolutely segmented.

(Karjaluoto, 2014, p. 105)

I. Discovery phase

It is important for a designer to conduct research (the discovery phase) prior to any design work in order to better guide the development of the project. This stage includes understanding the goals of similar publications – in this instance, artist books. It is helpful to understand what has been done historically for similar publications. For the development of this e-book, there are three major areas for research: understanding of the importance and goals of artist books in the past, understanding of the specific content (text and visuals) of the book, and exploring the possibilities and limitations of e-

publishing.

Self-published artist books: a select history

It is important for designers to understand how their publication fits in the history of similar publications. Self-published artist books have a long history. For decades, self-published and small-run publications have served a crucial role in visual artists' ability to share their work with the public. For many of these artists and visual communicators, publishing their own work is an attractive alternative to the financial and practical hurdles of working with large publishing companies. Acting as their own publisher or in collaboration with a small publisher, artists can clarify their artistic vision without compromise for considerations of profits, focus groups, and market forces. In these publications, artists can have a direct hand in the presentation of their work –working closely with a publication designer or designing the publication themselves. The merging of the roles of artist/designer, author, and publisher creates a freedom of expression. Triggs writes (2010) “this opens up the possibilities for experimentation not only of ... editorial direction but also of its graphic sensibility, both unencumbered by the kind of self-censorship ... in the mainstream” (p. 12). Before recent technological advances such as the Web and e-publications, however, artists were constrained by issues of production limitations, distribution, sales, and the expenses of each of these steps.

The rise of self-publishing took many turns in the past century, fueled by technological advances. Early 20th century artistic movements and groups such as the Dadaists, Surrealists, and the Bauhaus blurred the lines between “fine” and “commercial” art. Their publications – including *Merz*, *Dada*, and the *bauhausbücher* series – blurred

lines between artist, designer, author, poet, publisher, and distributor (Motherwell, 1989, pp. 164–165). With their personal and often controversial views and experimental design, these publications inspired late 20th century self-publishing movements include fanzine publications of the 1970s and 1980s (Triggs, 2010, pp. 14–15). Later movements were fueled by new, less costly technologies of production (photocopying in the 1970s and the rise of the personal computer in the 1980s). These technologies afforded many do-it-yourself publishers, including visual artists, an avenue of more direct communications with their audience.

During the later part of the 20th century, artists continued to publish very small run books and portfolios of their work. These pieces however, were often expensive to produce, had limited distribution – sold mostly in small independent bookstores, galleries, and museums gift shops – and were priced beyond the reach of all but wealthy collectors (Bodman, 2005, p.7–9). The affordable art book emerged with the technology advances in the graphic design profession, such as the migration to digital design and production in the late 1980s and 1990s. These works took many forms in the 1990s and 2000s including Web sites and digitally printed books produced in small quantities. The relative ease and broad reach of Web sites helped artists promote their work and reach an audience beyond the art gallery (Madden, 2004, p. 8). The strengths of the Web — flexibility to update, ability to reach many people, and its dependence on new emerging technologies — also proved to be a disadvantage. A Web site might be viewed as less valuable than a physical publication since its only perceived cost was Internet access. The often-short lifespan of a Web site meant it might be difficult or impossible to read just a few years after its publication. Many artists sought a more permanent solution.

In the early 2000s, this need was somewhat filled by the rise of “print on demand” (POD) services such as Lulu, Blurb, and Apple’s iPhoto. These POD services took advantage of the lowering costs of digital printing to produce reasonably high-quality publications in editions as limited as a single copy. This created a higher cost per unit than traditional printing. However, it meant the artist was now free to publish as he or she wanted without having to be constrained by conventional publishers and economic consideration such as the risk of printing thousands of books in hope of recouping the investment (Kennedy, p. 39). The POD model has become so appealing for self-published authors that online retailers such as Amazon have begun to offer POD books on their sites. This allows the retailer to avoid keeping a large inventory of niche publications. However, because of the high per-unit cost to produce one book at a time, authors receive a small portion of the sale price.

Source material for e-publication

Even more important than understanding the history of the genre (in this case, self-published artist books), a designer needs to fully understand the content with which he or she will work. This is equally important in designing for print, Web, or e-publications. To explore the opportunities for artists in e-publishing, the author designed an e-book based on an existing artist book. The print edition of *Recontextualized: Ordered Layers* is a collaboration between fine artist Randall Reid and graphic designer and art director Michelle Hays. The pair presents the best qualities of their disciplines to create a book rich in context that gives the reader a glimpse into the creative process and encourages creativity, exploration and hands-on activity. Reid is a mixed-media artist who creates artwork from found materials, especially remnants of discarded commercial art such as

signage and advertising. He removes these raw materials from their original purpose and gives them new life as collages that redefine their meaning. Of particular interest are materials that visually record the passage of time. As Reid wrote “my work reflects the process of aging. The chance and circumstance involved in its creation are closely correlated with the physicality of growth and decay. The surface speaks of the passage of time” (Hays, Reid, 2008, p. 93).

Hays presents Reid’s artwork and creative process through a thoughtful selection of his art, compelling design, probing questions of the artist and original photography of his materials, workspaces, and inspirations. Hays extends the boundaries of the printed book by inviting the reader to tear perforated rectangles of photos of textures from the book to emulate Reid’s creative process. Beyond the traditional role of an author or designer, Hays’ contributions create a true collaboration of two visual disciplines to create a work that appeals to fans of both fine arts and graphic design.

Having a different designer create the e-publication of an existing printed book presents unique challenges. In addition to being a self-contained publication that would highlight Reid’s work, the e-book edition of *Recontextualized* should respect the source material, capture the spirit of original publication and use technology to explore interactive potential unavailable or limited in print media. Many design decisions, including layout, presentation of the artwork, and navigation, were made differently for the e-book than they were for the printed book. Many of these decisions were driven by the potential and possibilities of the dynamic media of e-publications, compared with the static media of print. Some of these decisions, division of the text, layout, and selection and presentation of artwork, will be covered later in this paper. This creates a distinction

for two representations of the source material. Thus, one might say that the work has been “recontextualized” again.

Survey of artist e-publications

Many designers find inspiration for their designs in the work of other designers and creators. This step in the discovery phase requires special consideration when working in a new media. Part of the discovery phase should include a study of how other designers have solved similar problems in e-publications. This research not only gives a designer a view of what has already been published, it allows them to review what works and what could be improved in existing designs. During the discovery phase for the *Recontextualized* e-book, the author reviewed many e-publications, including e-books (both those with and without a printed edition), tablet editions of periodicals, mobile apps, and interactive presentations. The author devoted specific focus on publications that presented artists and their work. A common failing of these publications was the lack of interactivity with the artwork. Many publications did not offer enlargement of artwork to see details. This seems a crucial element in visually-focused publications, especially when a reader expects interactivity with the content in an e-book. Below are summaries of some of the more art-oriented e-publications reviewed during the discovery stage and insights from the review that influenced the design stage.

Mono.Kultur. Berlin-based arts magazine *Mono.Kultur* produced an iPad version of their Summer 2011 edition. This issue focused on record producer Manfred Eicher and his work with ECM Records. The e-publication extends its story-telling potential beyond that of a printed publication by incorporating music and video. This is appropriate to tell the story of the music producer in a way that would not be possible in print alone. The navigational elements of the layout are clean and useful, showing the reader how to navigate to the next section of content and showing how much of the article remains. This

feature supports Johnson's suggestion that "interactive systems should indicate what users have done with what they have not yet done" (2010, p. 98). This design solution inspired the navigational elements of the *Recontextualized* e-publication. **Discernment:** For *Recontextualized*, each page shows the reader what page they are on in that chapter and how many more pages remain in that chapter. This helps the reader navigate through the content and understand their place in it much as one can skim through printed pages in a book to see how many pages remain in the chapter.

Gregory Forstner. Published by Art, Book, Magazine, this e-book-only publication focused on the work of New York-based painter Gregory Forstner. The text is in the form of an interview, in which the text of the interviewer and Forstner appears in differing color and indentation. Since the main text for *Recontextualized* is also in an interview format, the separate treatment of text for each author would be a useful design technique. Despite being promoted on the publisher's Web site as "interactive," the e-book contains very few interactive elements beyond flipping pages with a swipe of the finger and turning captions on and off. The book does not allow readers to zoom in on details of the paintings, which would be a useful feature in a showcase of a painter's work.

Discernment: Using distinct typography is helpful in representing the word of two authors or speakers. This approach is deployed in the e-book design. However, an e-publication about a visual artist should offer more interaction with the artwork.

Francis Bacon. This 2012 e-book-only publication is an example of an e-book offering little advantage over a printed book, other than those inherent in the format – production costs, ease of distribution, and lack of physical space. The design mimics a print edition (which does not exist) to a ridiculous degree, including even a fake gutter area between the pages. While this e-book may help introduce Bacon to the mobile generation, it does little to take advantage of the tablet media or honor the painter's work. This e-book shows how to take mimicry of printed book to an extreme that does not

engage the reader or take advantage of any of the interactive potential of the e-book format. **Discernment:** As does *Gregory Forstner*, this publication devalues itself by not offering any interaction between the reader and the artwork. In addition, while an e-book might share some of the same user-interface elements of a printed book, there is little value in a direct replication of a printed book as in this design.

MoMA collection highlights: 350 works from the Museum of Modern Art, New York. The Museum of Modern Art, New York published a tablet version of their best-selling *MoMA highlights* print book in 2012. The e-book takes advantage of the tablet media by expanding the number of pieces featured and by adding audio and video elements that help the reader understand the significance of the work. This publication is inspirational for its addition of multimedia content that expands the reader's level of interactivity and understanding of the content. **Discernment:** This publication shows the importance of offering readers the ability to interact with the artwork to explore details in a self-driven manner.

Wim Crouwel: A graphic odyssey. The print and e-book editions of *Wim Crouwel: A graphic odyssey* were published in conjunction with a retrospective of the designer's work at the Design Museum in London in 2011. Compared with its print edition, the e-book expands the review of Crouwel's career by including a video interview and additional artwork. The content of each edition is similar, containing many of the same works. However, the structure of the e-book differs from the printed book. The printed book is divided into two main sections: a transcript of an interview with Crouwel and, for the vast majority of the pages, selections of Crouwel's design work. In the e-book edition, the content is divided into six sections, each with a distinct title page. Both editions contain a gallery of visual work. However, the e-book does not allow for readers to view details of the artwork. This is a missed opportunity. The potential of e-books to allow readers to interact with work should be explored in e-books of a visual artist's

work. **Discernment:** E-publications have the advantage of being able to present significantly more artwork than their printed counterparts without increasing the production costs. The e-publication of *Wim Crowwel: A graphic odyssey* takes advantage of this potential, as does the e-book edition of *Recontextualized*. The use of title pages to start each section will inspire the design of the initial chapter pages in the e-book edition of *Recontextualized*. Again, an e-publication of a visual artist's work misses the opportunity of using the media to allow exploration of details with enhanced interactivity with the artwork.

The survey of publications also revealed examples of some of the design principles described later in this study, including how clean navigation and typography work well in guiding the reader through the publication, allowing the reader to focus on the content, the use of typography to represent separate authors, and the increased interactivity with the artwork offered by the media.

II. Planning phase

The planning, creative, and application stages of a communication design process often overlap as a designer tests design elements to further refine the final product. These steps do not often separate easily but require the designer to move back and forth from one stage to another. Karjaluoto describes (2014) a communication designer's life as one of "research, planning, intuition, testing, measurement, and iteration" (p. 38). Since the goal of any design is to deliver the message in the most compelling and appropriate way, the designer should be willing to reconsider design decisions that appear lacking when developed (Karjaluoto, 2014, p. 105). These standards should apply equally when designing for either print or e-publications.

Designing this e-publication shows that the design process for a tablet publication

shares many of the same steps, principles, and decisions as the design process for printed books. In many cases, the basics of designing for print are slightly modified for use on a tablet. Some details, such as binding and shipping, become unnecessary in e-publication design. Figure 2 shows the relative importance of some details in printed and electronic publications. Issues related to the physical nature of printed books – including maintaining a page count based on the number of pages in a printed signature, paper selection, consistent color representation, shipping and storage – are bypassed entirely in e-publications. Others require more importance compared with print books, including establishing a user-friendly interface, offering dynamic content that can be navigated by the reader, and consideration of download times and limitations of storage space on mobile devices. Despite the lower costs of digital publication, as Dadich points out, “digital is not an infinite shelf space” (Dadich, 44:41). Consideration should be paid to how long a reader is willing to wait to download a publication and how much of the space on their device they are willing to spend to store it.

Topic	E-publication	Printed publication
discovery/research	●	●
design	●	●
planning	●	●
digital production	●	●
establishing an understandable user interface	●	○
dynamic content	●	n/a
pagination (increasing or decreasing paper count by number established by number of pages in a printed signature)	n/a	●
printing	n/a	●
shipping/delivery	n/a	●
distribution	○	●
file size concerns	●	n/a
binding/finishing	n/a	●
materials (paper, etc.)	n/a	●
considerations of increased cost of printing in color	n/a	●
press check	n/a	●

● important
○ less important

Figure 2. Comparison of details in creation of printed and e-publications

E-publishing is an attractive avenue for artist books (either in addition to or instead of print publications) due to additional qualities, including lower distribution costs, the global reach of stores such as Apple’s App Store and Amazon.com, and the ease of creating updates and new editions featuring new or additional artwork. While this study focused on the design factors, these additional benefits of e-publishing should be considered when deciding which medias work best for presenting artwork.

Understanding reader interaction

Prior to the creative stage of design of an e-publication, the designer should have an understanding of how the reader (or “end-user”) interacts with the finished product. That interaction will influence design decisions such as file format, layout, orientation, typography and navigation (Johnson 2010, p. 119–120). Analytics collected by the iPad publication *The Daily* and others show that tablets are used more frequently in the evenings and are used for longer sustained periods of time, when compared to smartphone and Web browsing (Kilpatrick, 2012, 21:00). Often, the tablet reader is in a more “lean back,” passive interactive mode, and is willing to spend time blocking out other distractions and focusing attention on the contents on their tablet screen (Will, 2012, paragraph 14). Therefore, reading e-publications on the tablet has more in common with reading printed books and magazines than it does to reading Web sites and other mobile device content. While the Web or smartphone user is seeking certain information, the tablet reader is willing to engage and give attention to the content. Evaluating the effect of tablet devices on reading habits, Cohen & Burns (2013) conclude “reading is becoming much more immersive and engaging in the process” (p. 121).

III. Creative phase: Sophisticatedly simple

Many of the design principles studied by book designers have direct applications when designing for the tablet. Scott Dadich, former creative director for *Wired* magazine, one of the first periodicals to fully embrace the potential of tablet publishing, says “It’s not a case where we’re dropping all of the things that we know and having to go learn a whole new language. It’s just using those tools in different ways and experimenting” (Garcia, 2012, p. 31).

As with other media, designing an e-book requires careful consideration and selection of design elements to best reach the goals of the design. For an e-book, design decisions include file format, the orientation and size of the screen, the grid, typography, the division of the content, layout of elements including navigation, and illustrations. This section will address these decisions and show how each is interrelated to the others and reinforces the overall effectiveness of the final design.

As the design process for *Recontextualized* e-book demonstrates, e-publications do not require an entirely new skillset. With a few modifications to better accommodate the media, graphic designers should be able to adapt quickly to e-publishing design. Designers should keep in mind that, despite the similarities in designing for both media, the e-book can deliver content in ways beyond the technology of ink on paper. Designers should consider the interactive possibilities when designing for a dynamic media, such as e-publication. While not all e-publications contain interactive components, the potential of multimedia, touchscreen interactivity, and responsive media should be explored when it is relevant to the content. Garcia recommends designers should “explore the potential of the tablet to enhance the story, but do not add unnecessary bells and whistles simply because it can be done. Design your tablet edition to be sophisticatedly simple” (Garcia, 2012, p. 13). This concept is applied consistently throughout the design process of this e-publication.

File format and its impact on design choice

In much the same way in which the choice of paper, binding, and printing technique affect the appearance of the printed book, the choice of the final file format for an e-

publication is an important decision that should be made early in the process. Since this choice affects all factors of digital design, it should be determined prior to the start of major computer-based production. When designing this e-book, the author considered several of the most popular file formats, evaluated the positive and negative attributes of each and created design tests to make the final choice. Below is a summary of the file formats considered.

EPUB. More e-books are created in EPUB than in any other format (Castro, 2011, p. 14). Its structure is similar to the structure found behind Web sites, including HTML text files and imported media (e.g., photos, audio, video, etc.). Also like Web sites, the content can be reflowed to fit the device screen on which it is viewed and the viewer can modify font choice and type size (Castro, 2011, p. 9). While this level of flexibility is ideal for reading a novel or other text-heavy book, especially on a small device such as a smartphone, the lack of control over design makes EPUB a poor choice for an e-book that will contain a small amount of text, a large number of images and a fixed design, as it imposes limitations on the design elements – typography, image size, and interactivity – that are important to an artist book (Everhart, chapter 2, section 3, 2:01).

PDF. A simplified version of Adobe's Postscript, the Portable Document Format (PDF) allows files to be shared easily and maintain all the design elements as the designer intended (Everhart, chapter 4, section 1, 0:08). The popularity of the PDF has grown to near saturation, with most computer users familiar with the format. Many software applications including Adobe InDesign, the industry standard for layout and design, create PDFs directly. The advantages of PDF for the current project include being able to design in a familiar design program, ability to maintain design elements and ease

of creation. Despite its ubiquity in the computer market, PDF has not been embraced as a standard for e-publishing. While a PDF version of this book would be easy to create within InDesign or other computer programs, it would need to be viewed on a separate app on the tablet. Additionally, Apple's iTunes store and Amazon.com, the two most popular distributors of e-books, do not distribute PDFs (Wischenbart, p. 5).

Stand-alone iPad app via DPS. This format was ultimately chosen as the best option for the e-book edition of *Recontextualized*. For the reader, an iPad app offers an immersive environment that is rendered exactly as designed. Adobe's Digital Publishing System (DPS) is a set of plug-ins to the industry-standard publication design program Adobe InDesign. Using DPS, the designer works in the familiar environment of the computer program they are likely using daily. DPS has been used by publishers of periodicals, such as *Wired*, *Martha Stewart Living*, *Fast Company*, and *The New Republic*, and e-books, such as *Wim Crouwel: A graphic odyssey*, reviewed in the survey of artist e-publications section above. With a few new tools such as the Overlay Creator, which adds interactivity to a design, and the Digital Content Viewer, which previews designs as they would appear on a tablet, a designer can create e-publications directly within InDesign. DPS publications have a standard navigation interface, known as chrome, which is activated by the reader by tapping the screen (Cohen & Burns, 2013, p. 125). DPS also offered tools for easy creations of elements such as slideshows and viewing details of images, that were important elements of a visually-driven publication such as *Recontextualized*. DPS is not the only creation tool available for iPad apps for designers considering e-publications without having to build or code an app from scratch. The Mag+ plug-in for InDesign was also tested for this project. Mag+ was designed primarily to create

electronic magazines and other periodicals that contain a large amount of text in each article. Layout options within Mag+ were more limited than with DPS. Background images remain static while the main text box needs to be scrolled to reveal all of the text in the article. A test chapter of *Recontextualized* was created with Mag+, but the author believed the design limitations were too distracting to develop the entire book with this software. DPS also has some design limitations and requires the use of Adobe's standard page and chapter/article navigation, which will be discussed later in this paper. When compared with the time, skills, and expense required to program a self-contained e-publication from scratch, these limitations were a reasonable compromise. The ability to work within in the industry-standard InDesign layout program allows designers to leverage their existing experience and expand quicker and easier in the e-publishing environment.

Selecting DPS to create a stand-alone iPad app early in the design process helped determine the process of the design and publication. Carefully evaluating and testing prominent file formats before attempting the main design stage saved development time.

Screen size and orientation

Determining the intended screen size of the publication is an important decision to be made early in the design process. *Wired*'s Scott Dadich presents a "design fidelity spectrum" that helps match the appropriate screen size with the content (Figure 3). For text-heavy publications, he recommends offering a greater flexibility of how the content is viewed – allowing the reader to change text size and typeface, so that it can be read easily on the small screen size of a smartphone in addition to the larger screen of an

electronic tablet. Image-heavy publications, however, should be designed specifically with the larger screen of tablets in mind, in order to present the content as clearly as possible and to maintain control over the overall design (Dadich, 12:29). This approach works better for an artist book, so the digital version of *Recontextualized* was designed with the screen of the iPad as its optimal viewing environment.

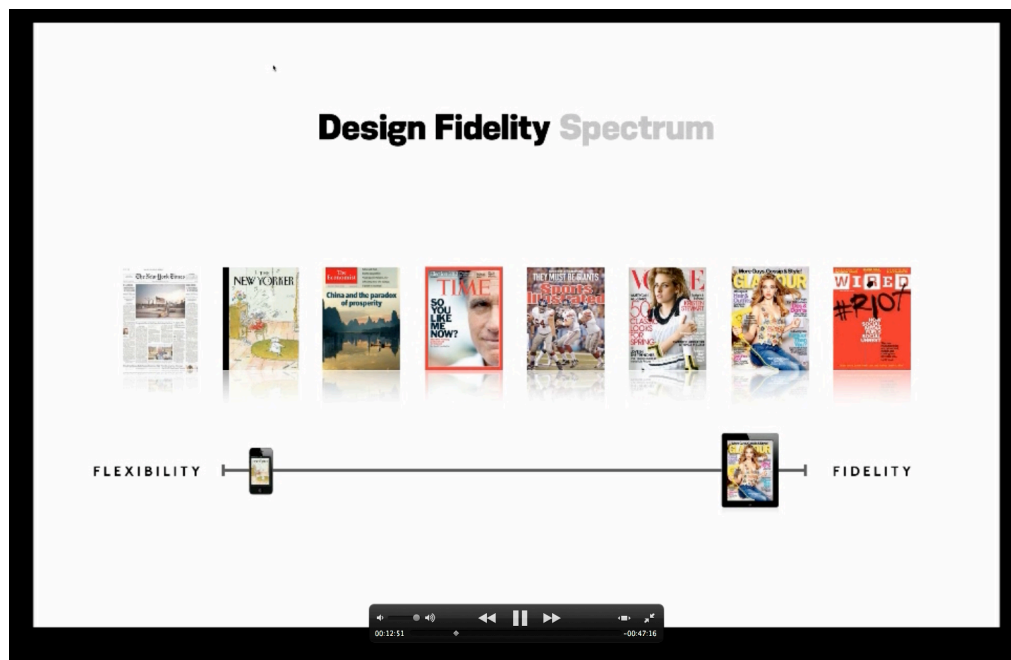


Figure 3. Dadich's design fidelity spectrum.

Screen orientation is one of the unique questions that need to be answered for design for mobile devices. Since tablets can be held either horizontally or vertically, the designer must decide to design for both or for just one. Garcia (2012) recommends horizontal layout for image-heavy e-books (p. 78). Since one of the goals of the *Recontextualized* e-book is to present the artwork, the horizontal layout allowed for larger images, and thus was chosen as the orientation.

Grid structure

As it does in printed publications and Web sites, the grid system in an e-publication is important to establish so that a reader can easily navigate and access the content. A grid system forms the structure or skeleton of a work of visual design. This framework determines the placement of design elements (e.g. text, photos, etc.). A well-designed grid “gives a book consistency, making the whole form coherent. Designers who use grids believe that the visual coherence enables the reader to focus on content rather than form” (Haslam, 2006, p. 42). In designing with a large volume of content – pages, words, images – whether for a printed or electronic book, a grid unifies the design elements. While the grid structure often remains invisible, its consistent use by the designer will reflect a visual cohesiveness to the viewer. Lupton explains the importance of a grid:

Designed in response to the internal pressure of content (text, image, date) and the outer edge or frame (page, screen window), an affective grid is not a rigid formula but a flexible and resilient structure, a skeleton that moves in concert with the muscular mass of information (Lupton, 2004, p. 113).

The grid system also establishes visual zones in which the viewer will quickly learn where to look for certain information. Examples of this in the author’s current work include areas where the page/screen numbers and other navigational elements appear in the area designated for captions for the illustrations. Figure 4 shows the basic grid of the e-book. This framework acted as a basic construct. Not all pages adhered to it strictly, but the far right column was always used to hold navigational elements such as page numbers and arrows. In a multi-page (or multi-screen) design, strict adherence to the grid system may result in a sameness overall or redundancy that can weaken the overall design. A

balance between strict grid adherences and flexibility in regards to structure will result in an overall stronger design piece with variation (Haslam, 2006. p. 42).

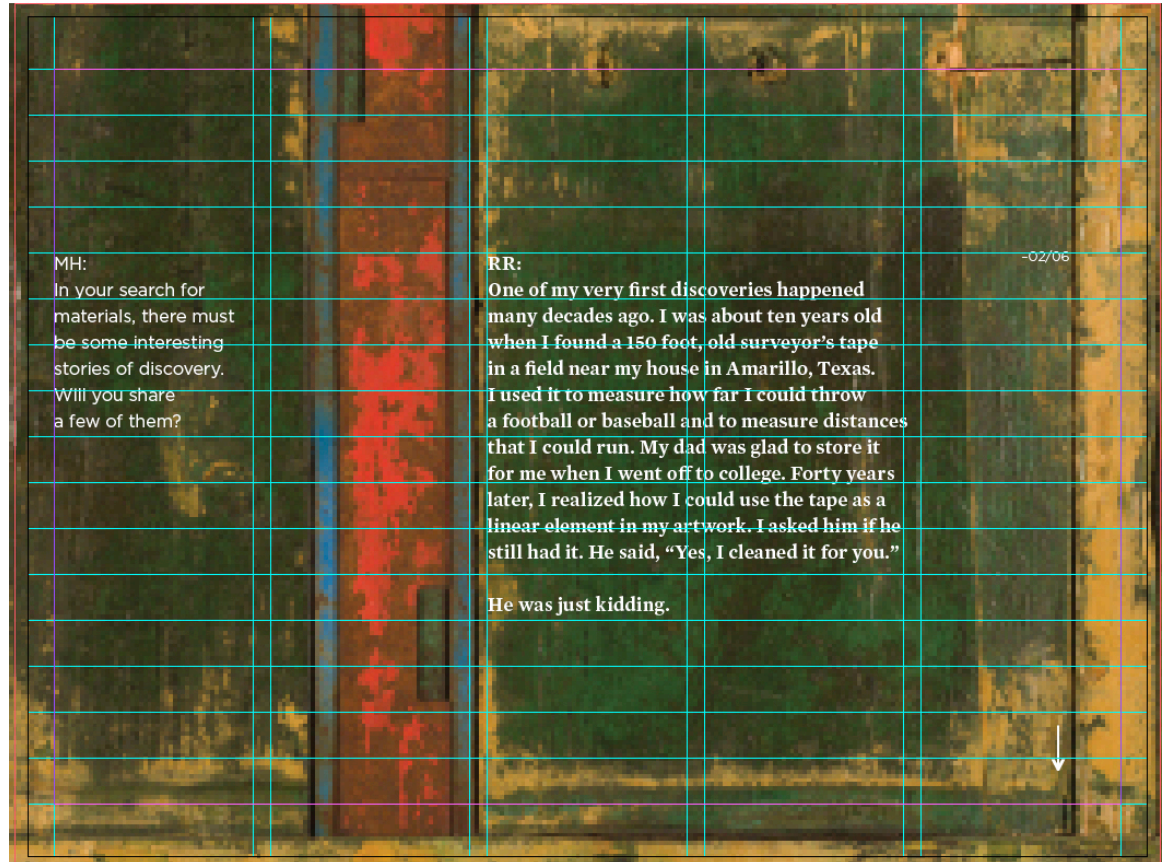


Figure 4. Grid structure of Recontextualized e-book.

Typography

As with printed publication design, an e-publication designer's choice of typefaces and use of typography can underscore the overall presentation of the content. Type can be expressive and draw attention or it can remain visually neutral to take a subservient role to the words themselves. In both printed and electronic publications, the selection of typefaces and type styles should be careful and thoughtful. Garcia finds that selecting type for an e-publication differs little from that of a printed publication:

Generally, the rules for selecting fonts for print are equally applicable to the tablet. For both print and tablet, it is all about appealing to the eye and the brain. Make it easy to read, allow for contrast of weight and sizes and emphasize layering. (Garcia, 2012, p. 104)

Tablet devices, such as post-2011 iPads with their Retina display, are capable of displaying type in great detail (Cohen and Burns, 2013, p. 127). However, even the most advanced electronic tablets have yet to match the visual quality of the printed page. This is most noticeable with type. Cohen and Burns (2013) suggest that body text on a tablet design should be at least a point larger than it would be in a printed publication (p. 127). During the design phase of *Recontextualized*, this principle was applied; testing of layouts revealed that type should be slightly larger on-screen to increase readability. E-publication designers should test typefaces on-screen and avoid those that do not display well on tablets as compared with the printed page. Attributes such as small or thin serifs, short x-height, and low contrast should generally be avoided. Adobe's DPS allows a greater flexibility with type when compared with flowable e-books creating with technologies such as EPUB. However, unlike the EPUB e-book, a DPS publication does not allow the reader to change the size of the text. While this helps avoid unpleasant type spacing and hyphenation, the static nature of the text requires designers to be thoughtful in their typography choices in order to make the reading experience enjoyable.

First and foremost, this e-book should be about the artwork and the voice of the artist – both in the visuals and in the words. As Bringhurst stated: “Typography exists to honor content” (Bringhurst, 2005, p. 17). To that end, the text should not distract the reader by calling undue attention to itself. In addition, since this book is presented as an e-book, the

closer that the layout and typography reflects traditional publications, the easier the reader should be able to overlook the container to explore the content.

For the e-book version of *Recontextualized*, the modernist approach of a limited typography palette was followed. This palette consists of two typefaces used in a controlled number of sizes and styles. Thus, the type acts as a passive graphic element in order to shift the reader's attention to the word and visuals, instead of distracting it with the type itself. The text was divided into two categories: the main narrative and supporting text. For most chapters, the main narrative was the voice of Reid, set in the Mercury Text typeface, while questions and observations from Hays and navigational elements were set in Gotham typeface. This sets the various elements apart from one another in the least obtrusive way (Figure 5). In the introduction chapter by Hays and the essay by Erina Duganne, the text is set in Mercury Text to establish it as the dominant textual voice of those chapters.

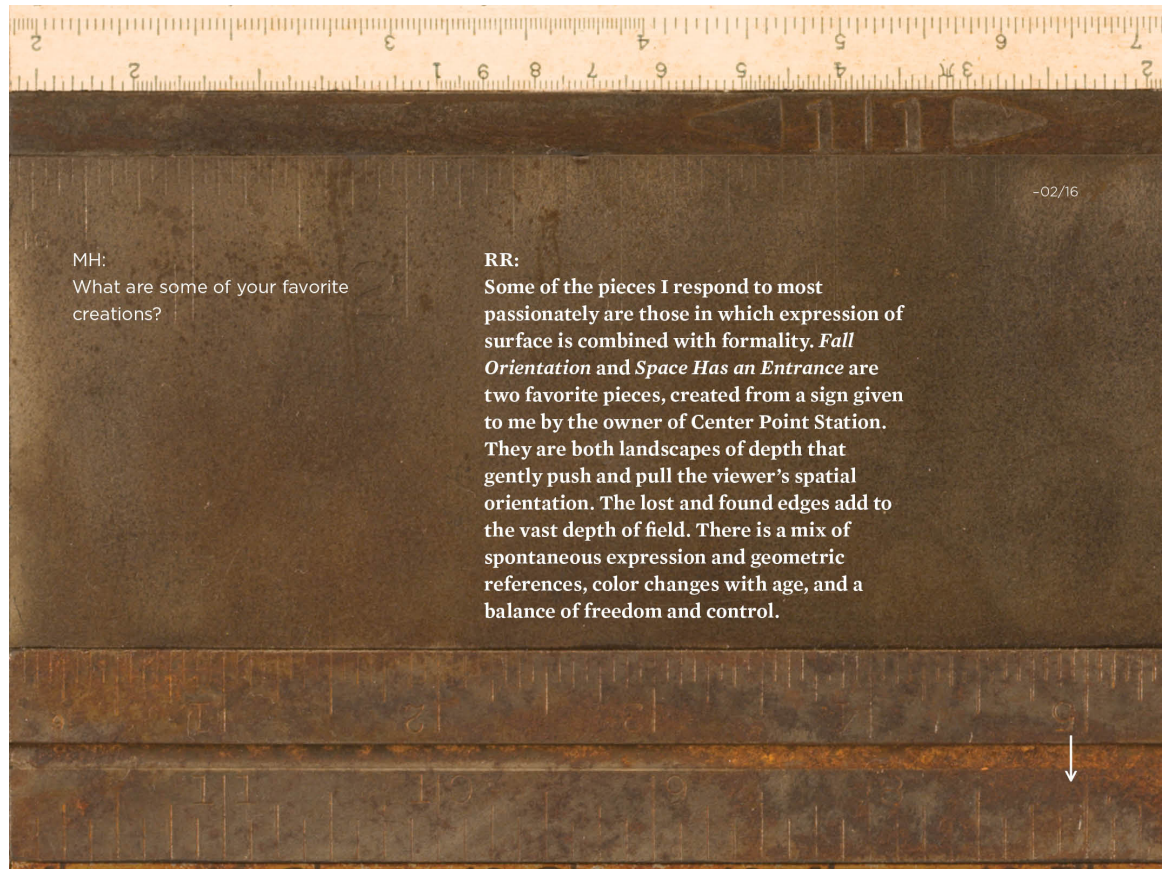


Figure 5. Screen layout from *Recontextualized*, showing the use of two typefaces to display the text/voice of two speakers.

Visual and historic factors influenced the decision to pair Mercury Text and Gotham in the design. Considering that many of the most popular typefaces used in the first part of the 21st century were designed and originally sold decades or even centuries before, both Mercury Text and Gotham are both relatively new typefaces. The Hoefler and Frere-Jones type foundry designed both typefaces. Gotham, originally designed by Tobias Frere-Jones in 2000 for *GQ* magazine, was influenced by signage at the New York Port Authority bus terminal. It is an example of typography that needed to be clear and easy to read (Garfield, p. 212). For *Recontextualized*, this typeface acts as a neutral visual voice to convey questions, observations, and navigational information.

Twentieth century print-based media also inspired Mercury Text. The serif typeface was designed to address the limitations of printing on low-quality papers, such as newsprint, used by most newspapers. Originally commissioned for the *New Times* newspaper chain to address inconsistencies of the various presses throughout the United States that printed its publications, Mercury Text makes efficient use of limited space (Hoefer & Frere-Jones, paragraph 1). This need to maximize the use of limited space is also important for e-publication design since the screen is smaller than many printed books.

In addition to their shared heritage, Mercury Text and Gotham also share visual characteristics that help both faces work well with each other. Each typeface has a larger than average x-height and short ascenders and descenders (Figure 6.) which creates a visual consistency between the two faces and helps them work together, quietly and efficiently delivering the text with neutrality. In the opinion of Cyrus Highsmith, senior designer for Font Bureau, “a good screen text face (for a tablet, smartphone or computer) should have a high x-height, open apertures and clear counter forms.” (Garcia, p.105–106). Mercury Text and Gotham meet these requirements, making them good choices for e-publications.

Recontextualized	Recontextualized
abcdefghijklmn	abcdefghijklmn
opqrstuvwxyz	opqrstuvwxyz

Figure 6. Comparison of x-height, ascenders and descenders of Mercury Text (left) and Gotham (right).

Dadich explains that the first priority of e-publication design, as it is with most communication design projects, should be to reflect the content accurately (Dadich, 36:13). This approach is reinforced through the use of typography that allows the reader to receive the message of the book's text directly.

Textual content (length, scope, size of individual bites of information)

For most designs, content for pages in e-book should be presented in smaller “bites” than those of printed books or Web pages. Klap recommends no more than 300 words per e-book page. (Klap, 2011, p. 15). Because an e-book reader expects interactivity with the content, a page full of text only will not encourage reading as much as that same content spread over several pages. Depending on the content, it may be best to break the text into smaller chapters for the e-book as compared to the print book. In the case of the print book of *Recontextualized*, the text elements in each chapter are already of an ideal size (varying between 145 and 728 words, with an overall average of 384 words per chapter) for an e-book design. Thus, the chapter structure for the e-book mirrors that of the printed book. The text for each text-based page of the e-book was divided to range from 34 to 246 words per page, with an average of 109 words per page.

Layout

In multi-page design, adherence to grid structure and consistent use of typographic and other design elements creates visual expectations for the viewers. This increases readability and retention (Garcia, 2012, pp. 107–108). If each new page presented a unique visual hierarchy and placement of elements, the reader would likely quickly tire of the exercise of figuring out each new system once they start a new page (Johnson, 2010,

p. 9). As with the application of grid systems, a balance between predictable elements in the same place and visual distinctions (in this case, in the main content of each chapter) help maintain a visually engaging but still readable environment.

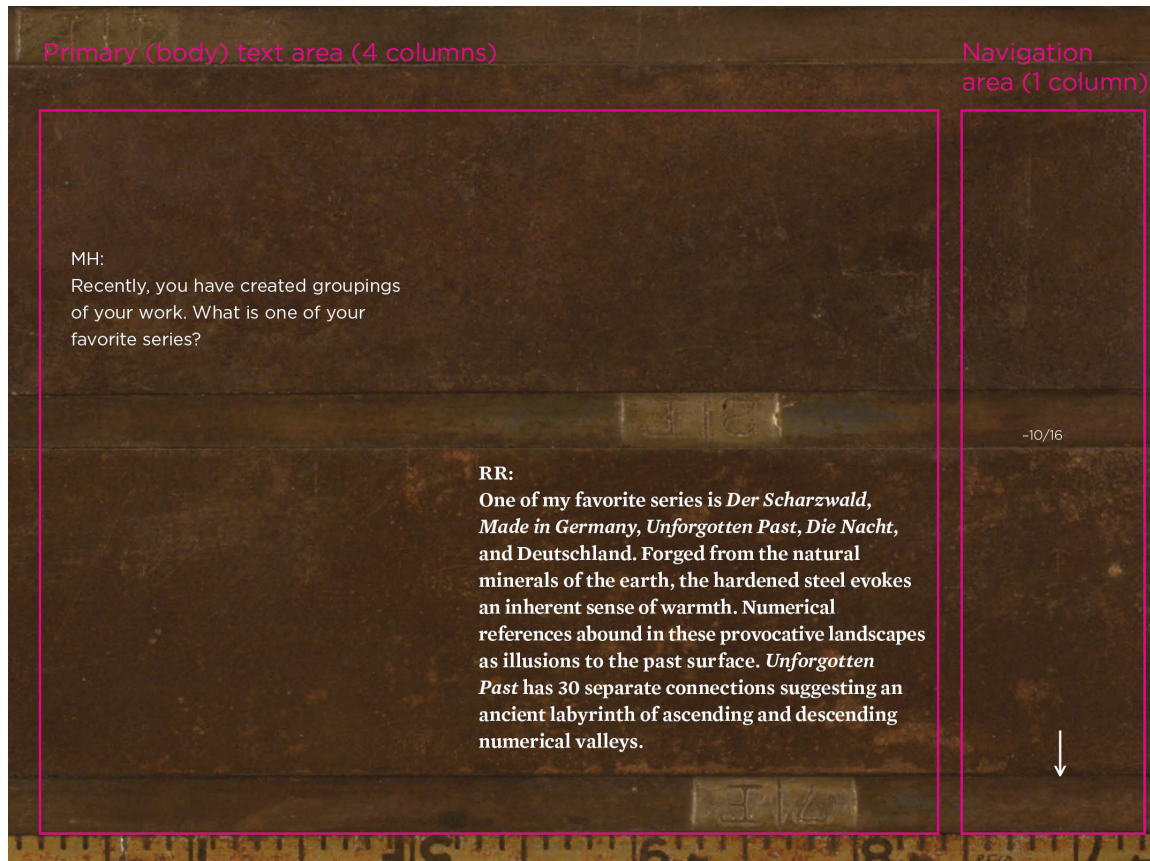


Figure 7. Layout of text page from *Recontextualized* highlighting areas of content.

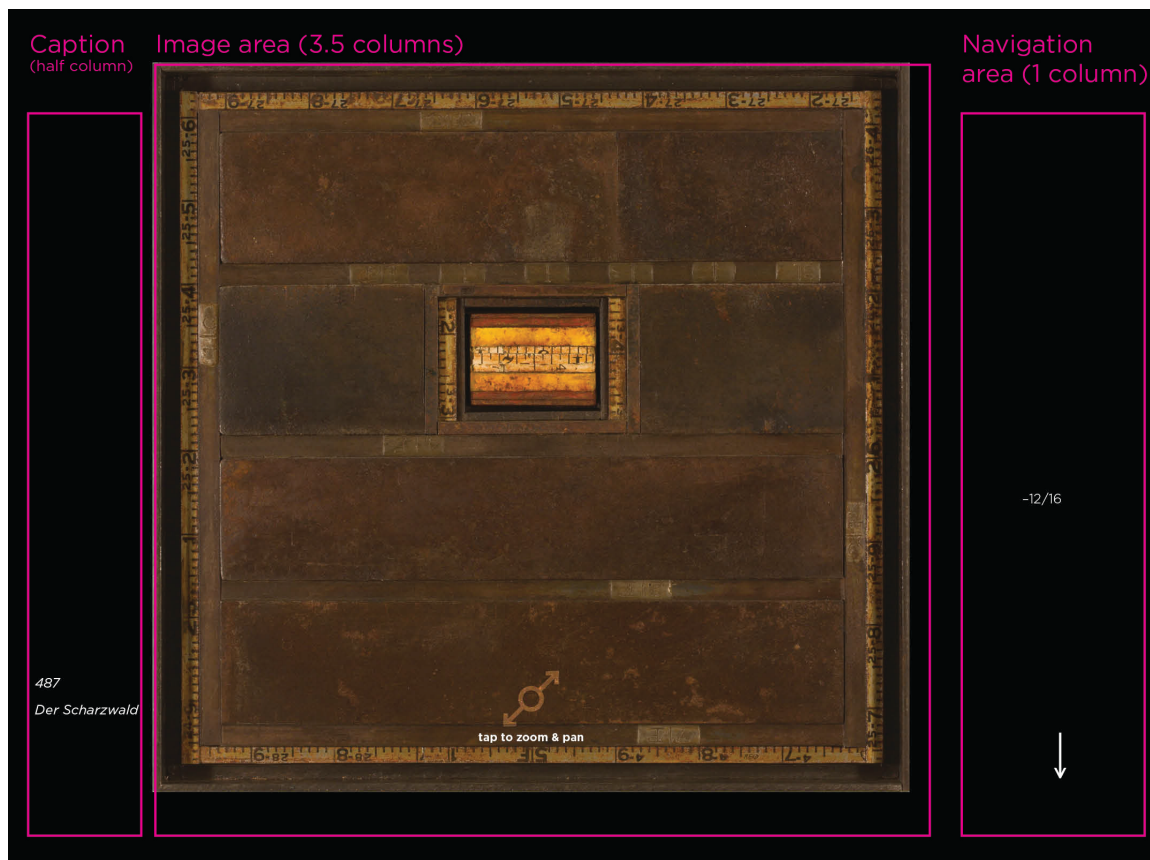


Figure 8. Layout of gallery page from *Recontextualized* highlighting areas of content.

Consistency in layout is even more important in tablet-based design as a reader will not have the same history of interactivity with it as he or she would with a printed book. The less a reader has to struggle to figure out the purpose of each design element on a page, the more inclined he or she will be to continue reading and viewing its pages. When it comes to designing for e-publications, Dadich explains that “subtle is really not your friend” and success in content engagement between the design and the reader should be based on the principle of “be obvious, be consistent” (Dadich, 36:30). Consistent areas for body text, gallery images and navigational elements help the reader navigate the content of *Recontextualized*.

Interactive and navigational elements

E-publications created with Adobe DPS have a standard interface for navigation, called chrome. Readers access this navigation by tapping the screen. Figure 9 shows the chrome interface in use for an issue of *Wired*. The reader can navigate horizontally to move from one article/chapter to the next and up and down through the pages of each article/chapter. While the chrome interface may seem limited to programmers or application designers who are used to designing a custom user interface, it is based on interactive and usability standards for ease of navigation. For graphic designers without programming experience, DPS's implementation of chrome helps ease the transition of their skillsets to design for the new media.

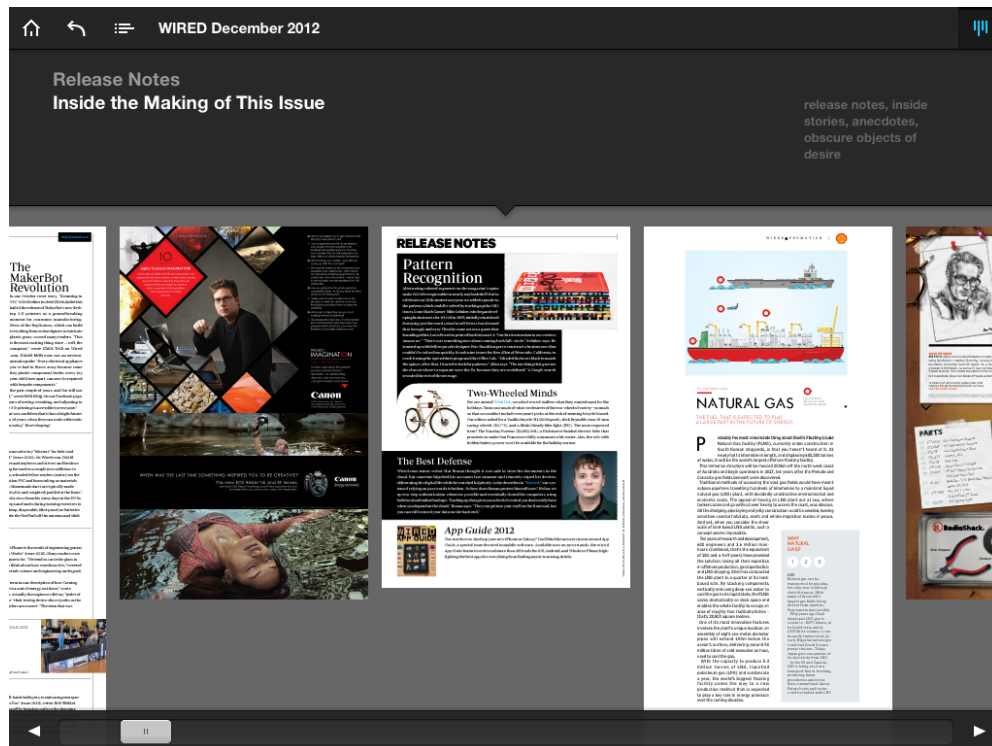
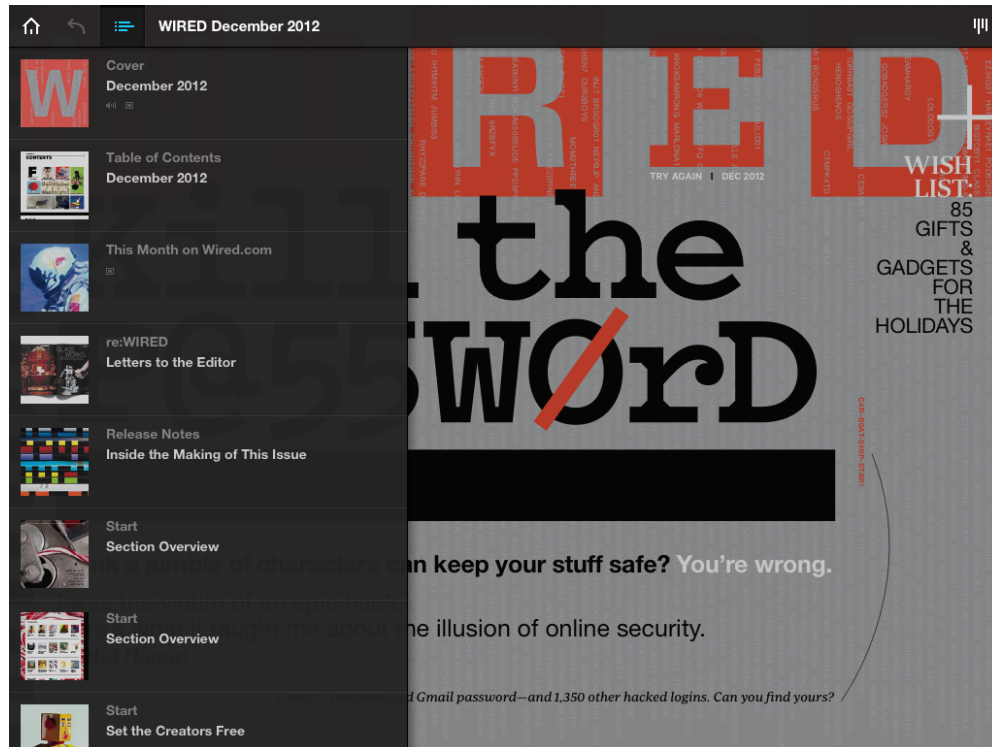


Figure 9. Screen views of iPad edition of Wired magazine, showing navigation via Table of Contents (top) and Browser Mode (below).

In addition to the chrome interface, DPS offers the ability to create interactive elements easily such as slideshows and “pan-and-zoom” images that are helpful for an image-focused publication (Cohen & Burns, 2013, p. 151). As when designing for printed books and Web sites, a designer should use consistent placement of page numbers and other navigational elements so readers can quickly acclimate themselves to how to navigate the content (Kilpatrick, 2012, 28:15). For those readers with some experience with magazine e-publications, the adherence to the Adobe “standard” of page structure – where stories or chapters are arranged from left to right and pages within a story or chapter flow from top to bottom – provides readers a familiar comfort level with the navigation and structure (Dadich, 26:30). Kilpatrick advocates that designers omit instruction pages that tell the reader how to navigate the e-book. Instead, the designer should create simple, intuitive navigation that minimizes the reader’s acclimation time to the structure of the publication (Kilpatrick, 25:18). The thoughtful use and placement of navigational elements follows Dadich’s suggested best practice of setting clear expectations with the reader and then satisfying them through consistent application (Dadich, 36:39).

While interactive elements, such as the perforated elements in the print edition of *Recontextualized*, can be incorporated into printed books, they are often prohibitively expensive and can be destructive to the book. However, an e-book reader expects to have greater interactions with the content. For this e-book design, there are two main areas of interactivity. Of primary importance, this book is based on the presentation of artwork. Therefore, the gallery section at the end of each chapter (Figures 10 and 11) allows the reader to zoom in on areas of the artwork and explore the details and textures in a piece.

This creates a higher level of interactivity and reader-driven focus than in printed books.



Figure 10. Layout of gallery page from Recontextualized.



Figure 11. Layout of gallery page from Recontextualized showing a reader's exploration of detail.

Detail photos on pages 67 and 69 of the print edition (Figure 12) inspired the gallery. The tablet media allows this exploration of detail to expand to all of the gallery pieces and allows a simulation of seeing Reid's artwork in person. Since many of his pieces end up in private collections, the gallery section of the e-book may be the only way in which many people are able to examine the work.



Figure 12. Page spreads from print edition of Recontextualized showing details of artwork.

A series of slideshows, containing several photos on a similar topic are arranged on the same page, so that readers can flip through them one at a time (Figure 13). The slideshows and gallery images add a layer of interactivity to the reader's experience.

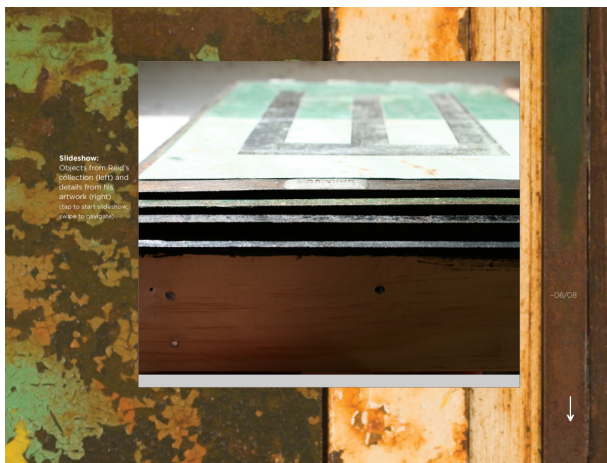


Figure 13. Screen layouts from Recontextualized, showing reader-driven slide show images.

Visual content

As would be expected in a publication of a visual artist's work, one of the main components of both editions of *Recontextualized* is the presentation of Reid's artwork. E-publications can present a larger collection of pages or images without increasing the production costs, as compared to printed books. Although more work can be represented in an e-book, as compared with print, that should not lower the standards of what work should be included, nor should it be overloaded to appear overwhelming to the reader. The selection of artwork for the *Recontextualized* e-book overlaps and expands on that in the printed edition. Nearly all of the images in the print book appear in the e-book, but many more examples of Reid's artwork are added in the e-book. Not only does this offer the reader more artwork, it also allows for a closer view of pieces in the gallery section of each chapter than could be offered in a printed book. This allows a high level of reader engagement that can be difficult or costly in a printed edition. The e-book allows the reader to zoom in on details on each work to view them in a manner closer to seeing the piece in person, without adding to the production costs. In addition, the gallery section also creates an opportunity for easy updating. As new pieces are completed, they can replace older ones in revised editions of the e-book. These could be offered to readers as free updates or as revised editions requiring an additional purchase.

While there are differences in design considerations for print and e-publications, especially if a designer is creating a custom user interface, Adobe's DPS tools create a quick path for print-based designers to leverage their skills to design for the new tablet media.

IV. Application phase

This study focused on the discovery, planning, and creative phases of designing an e-publication. The application phase, in this case involving submitting and publishing to a distributor, such as Apple or Amazon, is beyond the scope of this study. However, the steps and costs involved in distributing via these channels should be considered when contemplating publishing artist e-publications. Since tools such as Adobe's DPS allow print designers to leverage their skillset with a few modifications for the new media, the costs of hiring a designer for an e-publication should be comparable with those for a printed book.

Since digital distribution avoids the costs of printing, delivery, shipping and warehousing, e-publishing can offer wider distribution options for a reasonable entry price. When working with DPS, the most affordable option is publishing a single edition app through Apple. Adobe's Creative Cloud membership, which offers access and updates to Adobe's suite of professional design software, allows members to publish single edition e-publications to Apple's App Store for free (Creative Cloud membership currently is priced between \$16.85 and \$49.95 per month). Non-members can publish an e-publication for \$395. In addition, Apple currently requires a \$99 annual membership to their iOS Developer Program. Currently, Adobe's pricing for publishing Android apps through Amazon or GooglePlay requires a DPS Enterprise account, starting at \$500 a month. The Enterprise account is geared for larger publishers who publish several titles every month and wish to have one rate instead of individual costs for each publication. However, since Adobe currently ties access to publishing Android apps to the much-more

expensive Enterprise membership, publishing only for iPad is the most cost-effective option for self-publishers.

CHAPTER III. SUMMARY

This study sought answers to two questions: 1) is e-publishing a viable media for artists looking to self-publish collections of their artwork; and 2) how do communication designers update their skill sets to design for the e-publishing environment?

For artists, the research in this paper shows that e-publications are an excellent venue for self-publishing artist books. The combination of factors such as low cost, international distribution, ease of updating, and interactivity between the reader and the artwork warrant serious consideration for artists to produce e-publications in addition to, or instead of, their printed artist books.

Kilpatrick believes that the new digital tablets offer new and exciting design possibilities for communication designers. “There’s never been a better time to be a designer... this device [digital tablet] shows off typography, color, design in such a compelling way” (Kilpatrick, 2012, 2:47). Designers should embrace the new design possibilities of e-publishing. As this study has found, a designer does not need to learn a completely new set of principles and tools to design e-publications. Many fundamentals are well established in design education and require only a few adjustments to adapt to the new media. Just as many print-based designers went through an adjustment to design for the Web, the transition to e-book design asks that designers add to their existing design tools and modify their practice to incorporate e-publishing design into their skill sets.

In 2014, we are still in the early years of e-publishing and tablet-based design. As the new media matures and readers become more acclimated to the media, e-books will

become more common and take their place with other established media forms including printed books, magazines, and Web sites. The sooner designers can start designing for this media and artists can use it for self-publishing, the sooner artists can use it for self-publishing to distribute their artwork to a mass audience of e-publication readers.

Future research

This study limited itself to the discovery, planning, and creative phases of a new e-book based on a printed book. Questions of marketing, distribution, and potential revenue were not explored. While this study established that e-books are an attractive venue for artists to collect and present their work, future research regarding e-publication uses and revenue could lead to a stronger argument for the effectiveness and return of investment of e-book development for an artist.

As most of the design process for *Recontextualized* occurred during the first two years after the introduction of the iPad, the design solution did not fully take advantage of the design possibilities of the evolving media. Since one of the main goals of the design process in this study was to present the contents of a printed book in the e-book format, it was necessary to adhere to some standards established by the original printed book. Future research could create stand-alone apps that have no connection to a printed work. One concept, ultimately rejected for lack of a reasonable technology solution for the current design, was based on pages 60–61 in the printed edition (see Figure 14). This could be expanded into a fully functional app that allowed the viewer to mimic Reid's creative process by letting them deconstruct elements and combine them electronically to create their own work. Development of this type of publication would require custom

programming that would lend itself to collaboration between a graphic designer and computer programmer.

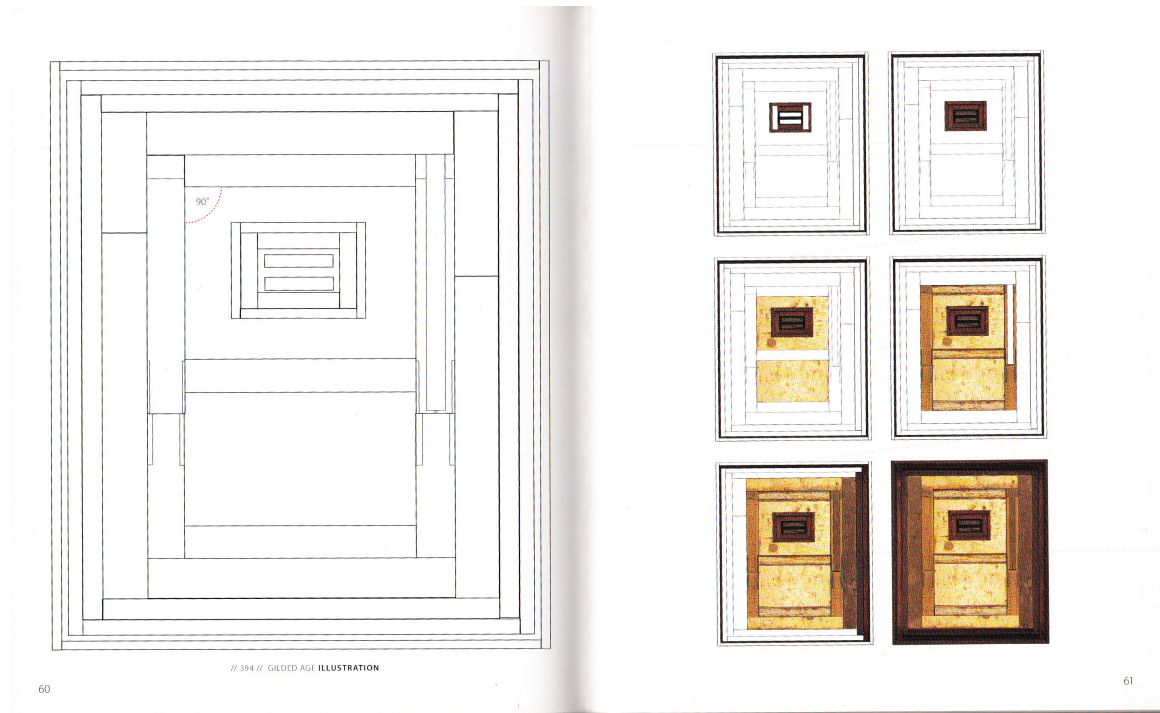


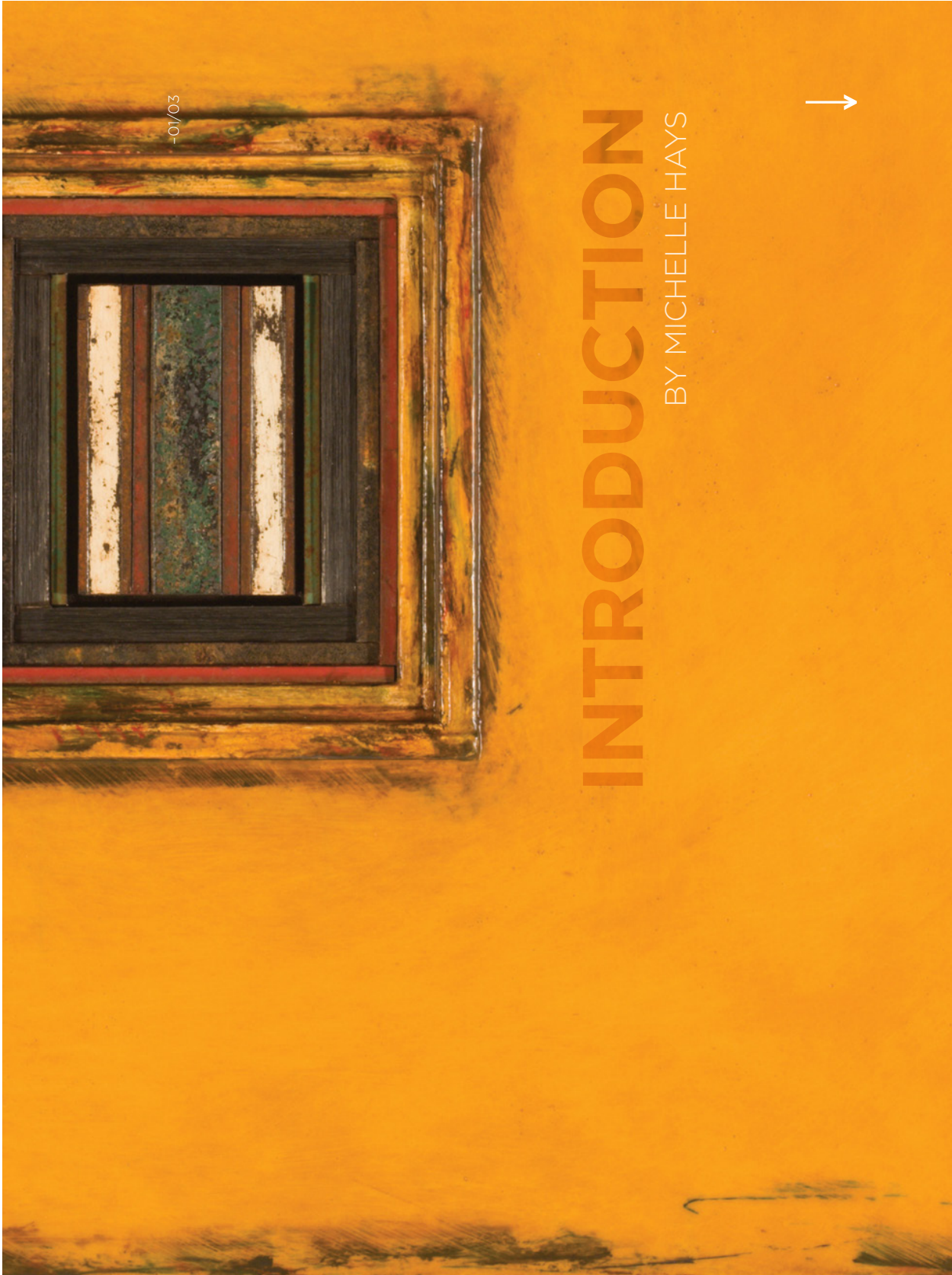
Figure 14. Page spreads from print edition of Recontextualized showing inspiration for future e-book/app development.

The first years of e-publication development targeted to digital tablet devices have begun to lay the foundation for future practices. As Kilpatrick explains, “the design community is really at the forefront of defining what this thing is” (Kilpatrick, 2012, 03:30). For both the future of the publishing media and the practice of graphic design, it is important that designers continue to explore the potential and push the boundaries of the media.

APPENDIX







-01/03

INTRODUCTION

BY MICHELLE HAYS



While navigating

through life, at times you will find yourself standing at an intersection with others whose interests meet and converge with your own. It was at one of these life intersections where I met Randall Reid. I became acquainted with Randall while designing a monograph book for him.

A familiar visual language within his work—layers, formal geometric constructions, systematic grids, topographic elevations, and tactile textures—connected with me.

I am interested in layers, systems, and textures and how they translate through my own work and processes. In recent years I delved into designing experimental books, both in form and concept, that incorporate multiple levels or layers of communication. These layers include visual, tactile, linguistic, and hands-on interactive methods.

Through my experiments, I discovered that communication through these designed layers is vital to enlarging the dynamics of a reading experience for many individuals.

-02/03



Layers, both physical and metaphorical,

have brought us to this intersection to create this book. They are the book's foundation.

It is our hope that this book conveys Reid's inspirations and working processes by demonstrating the possibilities of interplay among materials, form, senses, text, and imagery.

-03/03



REID



-01/05

RANDALL REID

THE ARTIST AS WORKER

BY ERINA DUGANNE

Upon first glance,

Randall Reid's box-like constructions seem to share certain morphological likenesses and formal affinities with art works often associated with the term Minimalism.

Both sets of artists use their works to draw attention to the relationship between the object, the viewer, and its environment.

They also share an abstract formal language that consists primarily of precisely measured and repeated geometric shapes as well as such raw material as wood and steel.

But in spite of these commonalities, their approaches could not be more disparate.

This is because, whereas a Minimalist artist like Donald Judd sought to remove the hand from his objects by having their parts fabricated by external manufacturers and specialists, for Reid, craftsmanship as well as the associative potential of his objects and materials—often found quite accidentally in Central Texas antique stores, flea markets, and salvage yards—are central.

-02/05




Reid is particularly drawn to the chance and random encounters that bring him and the objects and materials that form the basis of his works together.

Unlike Judd who sought his works to be seen as a whole, Reid's works are composed of, and more importantly, depend on the relationships of their parts. The precise nature of these associations, however, is not known to Reid until he is in the process of constructing, or one might even say fitting the pieces of his compositions together. This is because, while Reid may be drawn to certain formal, personal, historical, and even spiritual qualities in the objects and materials that he finds, or that in many instances find him, it is the making, and, more specifically the deconstruction and reconstruction of these items, which determines their artistic use-value.

Reid is particularly drawn to the chance and random encounters that bring him and the objects and materials that form the basis of his works together. He prefers items that have been discarded and even forgotten, especially those whose patina and surfaces suggest the passage of time and so hold within them a richly layered history and spirituality. At the same time, Reid does not let the original use-value of these items dictate their function within his works.





This is most evident in his use of text, numbers, and lines, whose formal arrangement, often dissected and reassembled from old signage and measuring devices, some even dating to the 1890s, takes on an abstract rather than symbolic significance.

For Reid, his purpose is not to preserve these items, which he often juxtaposes with newer materials, but rather to reactivate and reinvigorate their artistic potential.

In so doing, Reid approaches these items as well as his transformation of them with a kind of formal reverence and preciousness.

In this sense one might say that he treats them as a worker, not in a socio-economic sense, but as the product of an imaginative and contemplative workmanship. In incorporating objects and materials, both found and constructed, Reid imbues them with a new artistic use-value. This idea may seem out of place in today's art world where so many works are regarded in terms of their social and political use-value. Yet, while Reid may embrace traditional ideas about art and art making,

-04/05

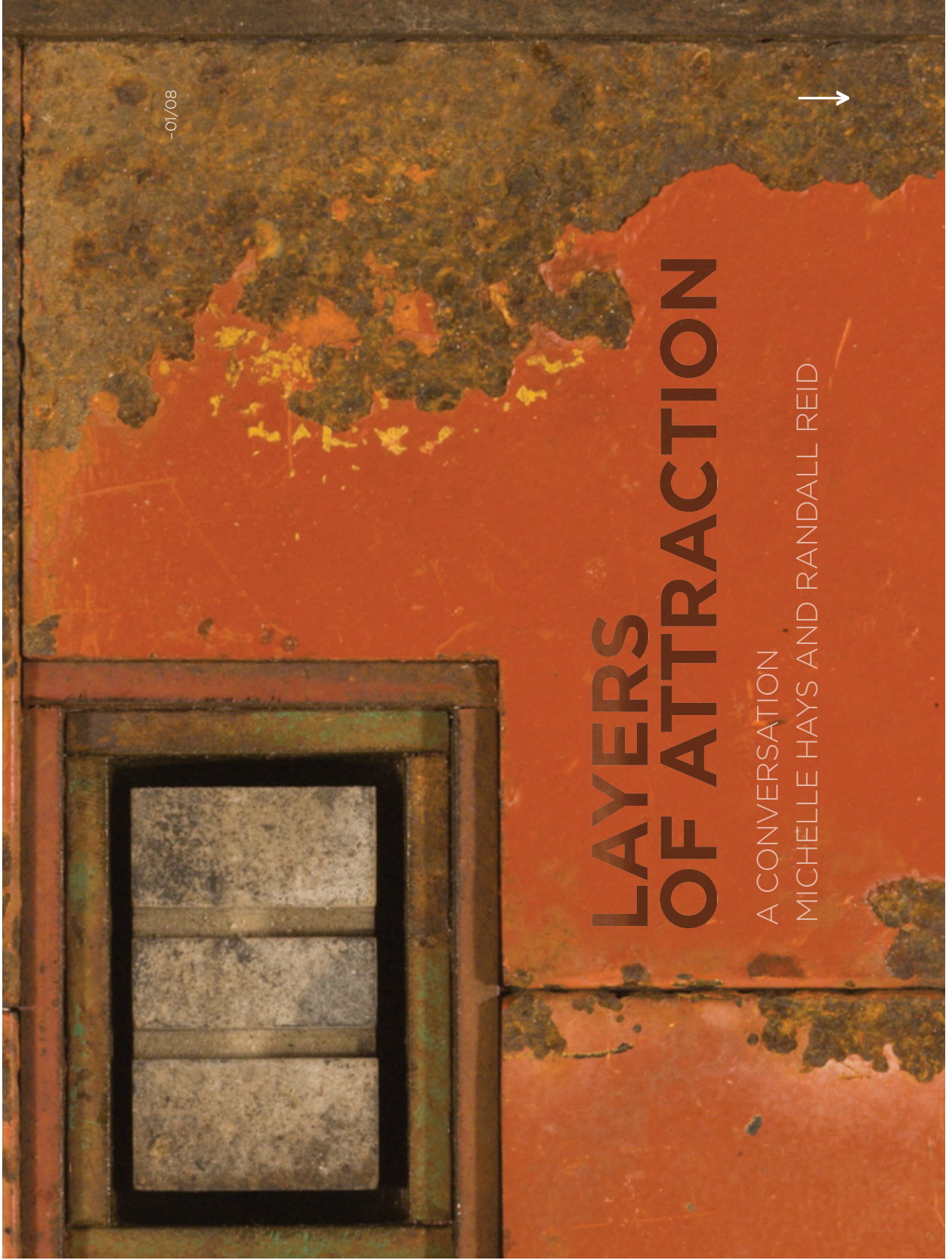


it is precisely his artistic re-use and alteration of these items which reminds us, as the German artist Kurt Schwitters remarked in relation to his 1919 *Das Arbeiterbild*, or *The Worker Picture*,

“Art is a spiritual function of man, the purpose of which is to redeem him from the chaos of life and tragedy.”

-05/05





MICHELLE HAYS:

Describe your selection process when at flea markets and antique stores.

What are you looking for in an object and materials?

RANDALL REID:

I move through spaces rather quickly if I feel they offer little or no possibilities. I slow down when I begin to notice the types of materials that I am searching for. I ask myself a series of questions during my search.

Are there any unusual patinas, textures, or exposed underlying layers? Is there a direct visual appeal, sense of timelessness, natural order, inherent spirit, or reference to history? Does the material appear well worn? Does a magnetic attraction begin to occur — a personal connection? Is the material too heavy or thick? Can it be mined into component parts, deconstructed, or recontextualized? What other materials can it be related to? Can the spirit that lies within be discovered? Is there any calibration, numeration, or typography? What is its state of preservation?

-02/08



-03/08



396
Espirito Santo

It sounds like you have a visceral response to the objects and surfaces of the materials you collect, which guides your selection process. The condition of the object or surface, such as its aged appearance, has more appeal to you than a new object with a pristine appearance. You also seem interested in discovering the object's history. When you compose your work, you are creating a new history or story for that object and material.

True. The found materials and how I assimilate them into my work hold unusual and mysteriously veiled stories. I am interested in the history surrounding the object. Who were the previous owners of the objects I have collected? How many lives have they lived? What conditions have they endured? Have they been lost and found? What is their destiny now that they are no longer in their original form, but are dispersed through various artworks? Will they share a common ancestry? Who will be their new collectors?

-04/08

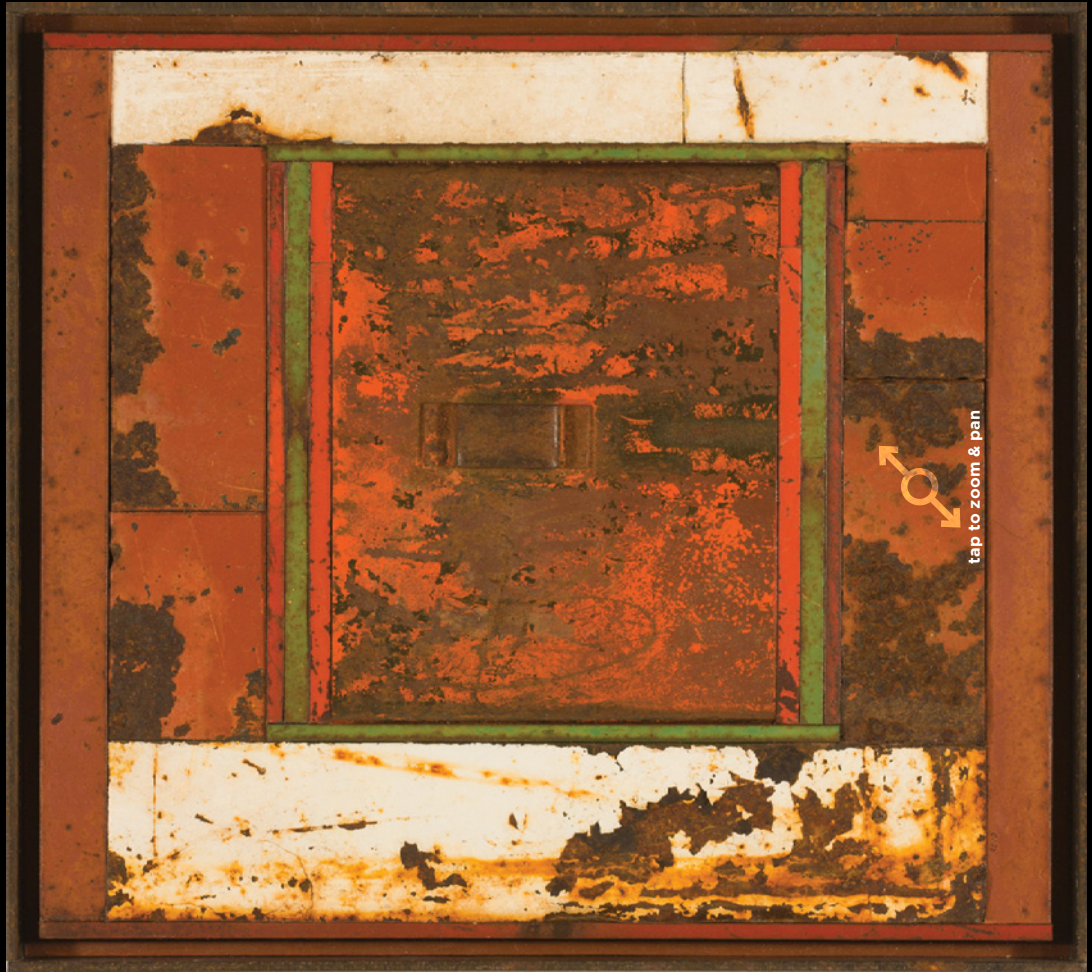


**What is their destiny now
that they are no longer
in their original form,
but are dispersed through
various artworks?**

-05/08



-06/08



429
Brick Oven



402
Espirito de Vida



-08/08







MH:

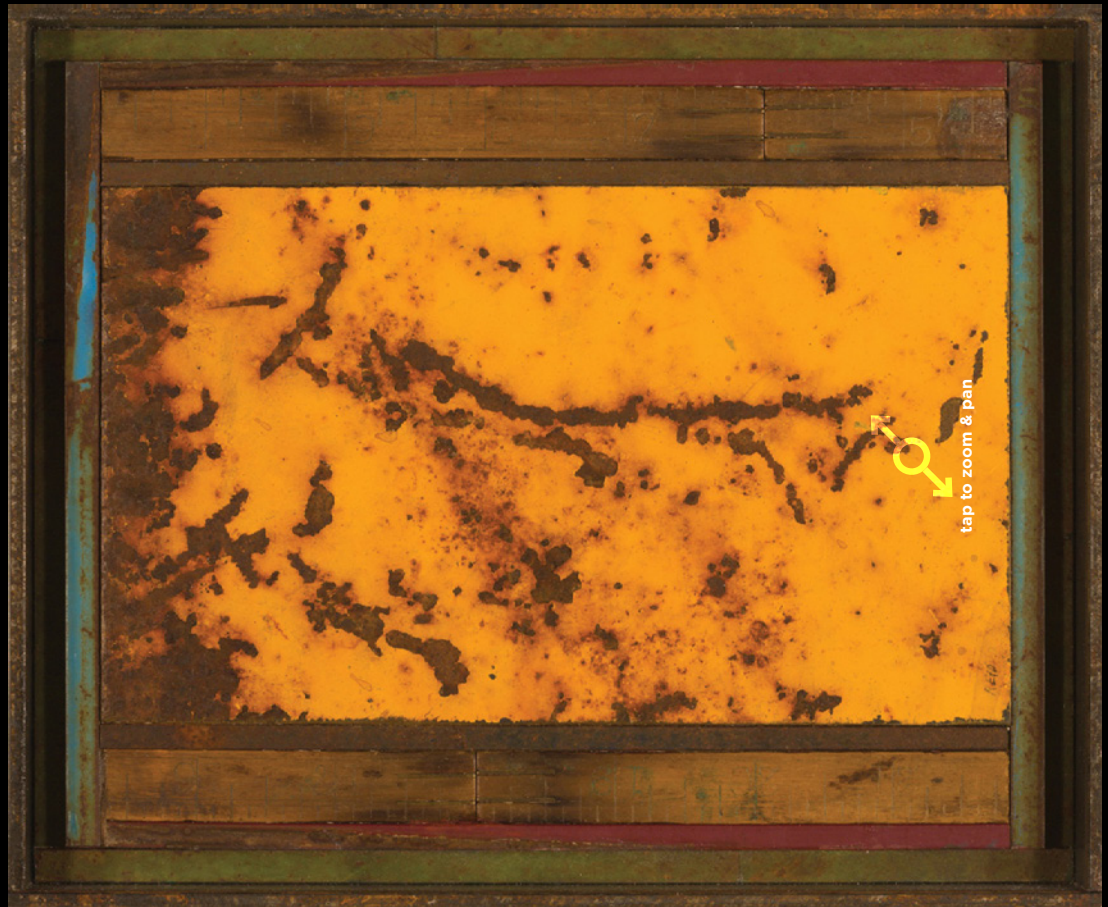
How often do you travel on journeys for objects? Is there a particular store, place, or region where you find these objects?

RR:

Three or four times a month, I embark on a hunting and gathering phase throughout Central Texas. I visit salvage yards, garage sales, flea markets, trade days, and antique stores. Aside from this, I am always on the lookout for an accidental discovery. I revisit many of the same areas because the ebb and flow of new material is constantly changing. I am fascinated by how the exact place, time, and chance moment of an object's existence aligns with my perception and recognition of its potential use. I also have several scouts who are always on the lookout for potential materials.

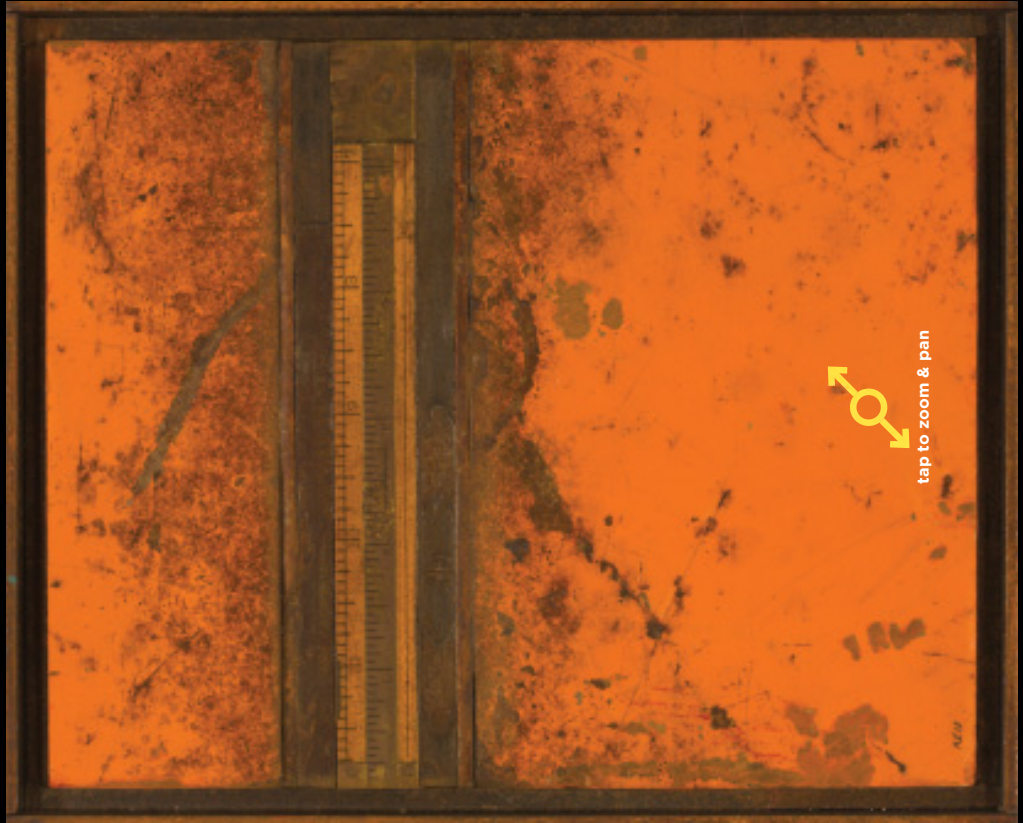
-02/05

-03/05



430
Storm of Light







MH:

In your search for materials, there must be some interesting stories of discovery. Will you share a few of them?

RR:

One of my very first discoveries happened many decades ago. I was about ten years old when I found a 150 foot, old surveyor's tape in a field near my house in Amarillo, Texas. I used it to measure how far I could throw a football or baseball and to measure distances that I could run. My dad was glad to store it for me when I went off to college. Forty years later, I realized how I could use the tape as a linear element in my artwork. I asked him if he still had it. He said, "Yes, I cleaned it for you."

He was just kidding.

-02/06



471
Vintage Green




-03/06



The next two stories are about rakes I have found. On one of my hunting and gathering trips, I went to a recycling yard and didn't find a thing. Just as I was leaving, I saw a speckled white rake.

I asked the owner if he would sell it to me. He would not sell it because he used it to rake cans. I left the yard and purchased a new rake, hoping he would accept it as a trade.

We ended up trading rakes. He told me he got the better deal. I told him we both got a good deal.



One Saturday in Wimberley, Texas, I thought about what I would I do if I saw someone carrying an armful of rakes. Several minutes later I purchased seven rakes. On the way home, I purchased two more rakes at a garage sale several doors down from my house. I traveled to an antique store in Austin that same afternoon, hoping to find more. Just when I thought there were no rakes, I looked up and saw two more hanging directly above my head. I ended up with 11 rakes that day.

-05/06





tap to zoom & pan



-06/06







-02/08


MH:

You have several antique collections at your home. What drives your desire to collect these objects?

RR:

I believe it is more a subconscious connection than any one particular aspect. It is an aesthetic response. I look for the non-pretentious object—one that is simple, pure, and contains a certain amount of innocence. It is the way that the designers from the past captured the purity of form; the beauty of shape, color, and texture. It's the relationship of materials to other things; the way time has mellowed their surfaces and altered the original intent that resonates with me. I am particularly interested in the patina and the way underlying surfaces are revealed by such means as peeling paint.





That reminds me of a short poem
I once wrote:

**Coercive constraint,
the ship peeled its paint.**

-03/08

In general, I like wood or steel
versus plastic, cast iron, or tin.

I also look for uniqueness;
something that does not look
mass-produced or commercialized.





Slideshow:
selection of objects
from Reid's collection
(tap to start slideshow;
swipe to navigate)

-04/08



Common themes in your antique collections include cowboys, Indians, horses, boats, ships, cars, soldiers, tools, measuring devices, miniature chairs, and airplanes. There is an obvious tendency to collect objects of play. These objects seem to represent the simplicity of an era—innocence, and the imagination and creativity needed to interact with them.

I agree. We tend to generalize the past as simpler times of life, making us think of those times as idealistic and romantic. Maybe that is why my art and these collectables set the mind at ease. They are not about conflict or stress. They are more about reflective innocence.

-05/08





Slideshow:
selection of objects
from Reid's collection
(tap to start slideshow;
swipe to navigate)

-06/08



Your artwork is hanging among narratives being told on shelves, tables, windowsills, cabinets, and floors. They surround you literally and conceptually. Your work becomes part of the narratives. Is there a theme or common thread in how you and your sons arrange the objects?

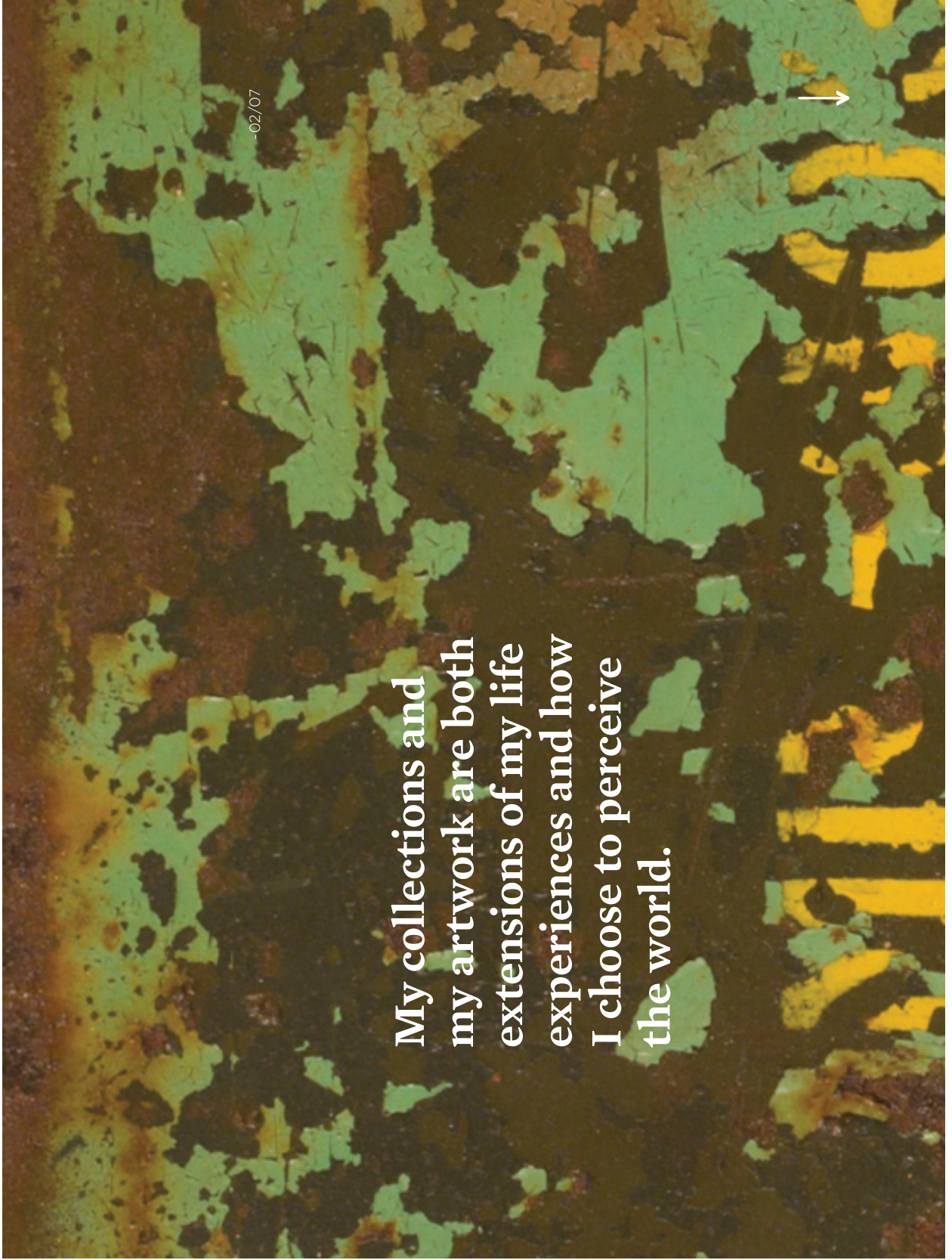
I usually arrange without an intended concept. I may place a toy next to another toy based on intuition. My sons explore more of the conceptual connections between the toys. They tend to create more narrative scenes complete with visions of re-enactment and with a far greater sense of storytelling. Their scenes are far more visually compelling and ambitious than my own.





Slideshow:
selection of objects
from Reid's collection
(tap to start slideshow;
swipe to navigate)





-02/07

My collections and
my artwork are both
extensions of my life
experiences and how
I choose to perceive
the world.

MH:

An observation I noted early on is the connection between your antique collections and your artwork. You have surrounded yourself with aged and worn objects. These objects serve as a subconscious visual vernacular consistently referenced in your artwork. Parallels can be seen in the surfaces, form, and color palettes. Now that you are aware of the connections, have you become more conscious of the influence of your surroundings?

RR:

I definitely recognize the influences more. There may even be an ethereal transference as my art becomes the antique.


-03/07



-04/07



438
Green Fields



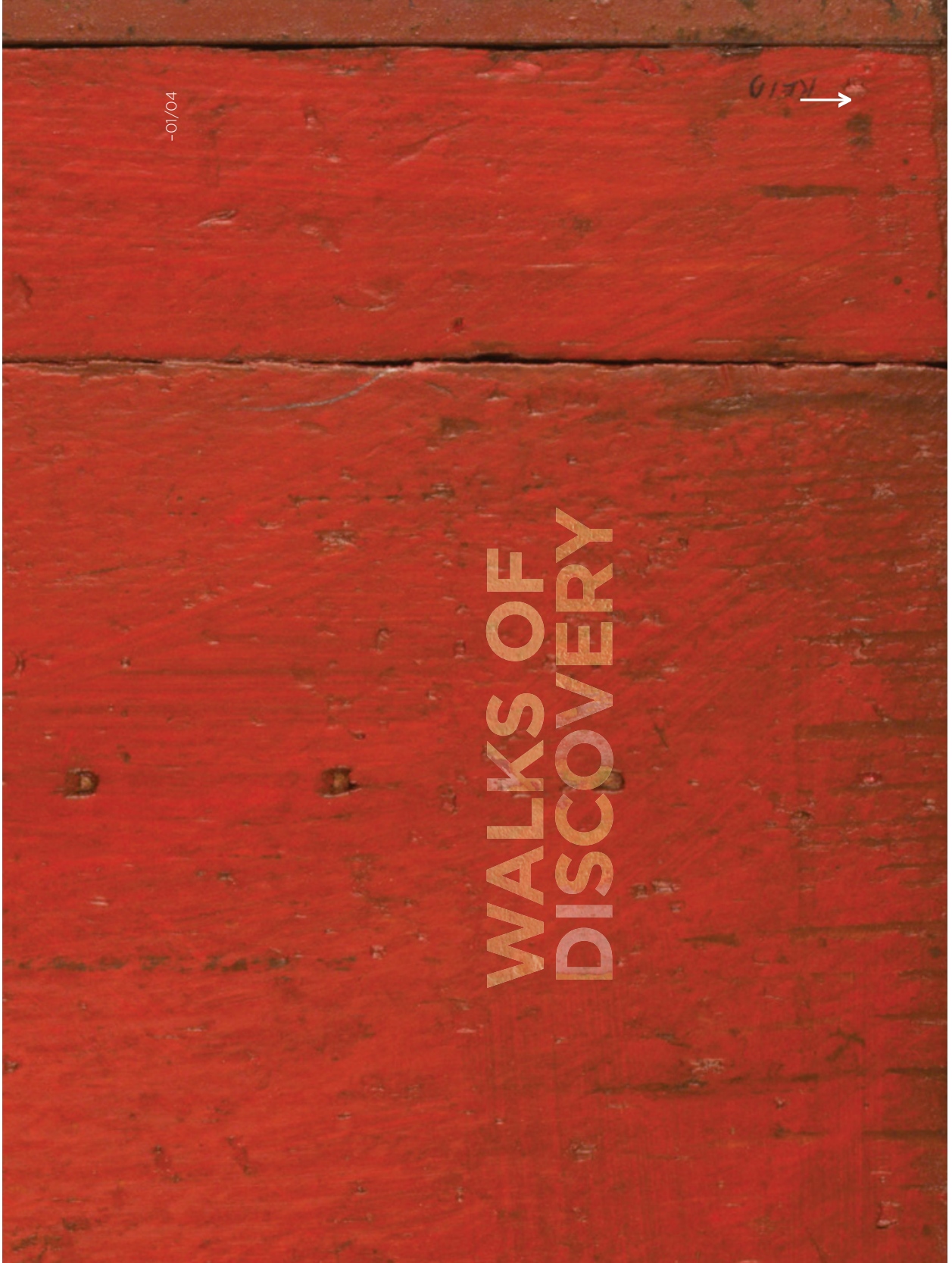
The desire to collect antiques and objects of interest has always been a part of my being. My collections and my artwork are both extensions of my life experiences and how I choose to perceive the world. The greatest connection between the collections and my art is more likely a subconscious filtering of color combinations, surfaces, and the process of aging. A transcendence from an object to a state of mind occurs when the object provokes a stillness that leads to contemplative thought. It is within this same way that I want my art to affect the viewer. I want it to provide the viewer with a means to a deeper thought process.

-05/07



Slideshow:
Objects from Reid's
collection (left) and
details from his
artwork (right)
(tap to start slideshow;
swipe to navigate)





WALKS OF DISCOVERY

KE10 →

← -01/04

MH:

You often walk from one end of Texas State's campus to the other to reach your studio. As part of the research for this book, I documented that environment through photographs. You encounter many objects and circumstances, both man-made and natural, along the way.

We already discussed the links between that visual environment and your work. What other discoveries have you made as you have continued this visual investigation on and off campus?

RR:

Carrying a camera for two days helped me to focus and look even closer at the natural relationships that are important to my aesthetic. As I made my way across campus, I saw visual reminders of the numerous connections between my work and the effect nature has on man-made structures. These visual journeys continued within the interior of buildings, and I was left with a sense of confirmation.

-02/04



Slideshow:

Details of elements
on the campus
of Texas State
University-San
Marcos
(tap to start slideshow;
swipe to navigate)



-03/04







MH:

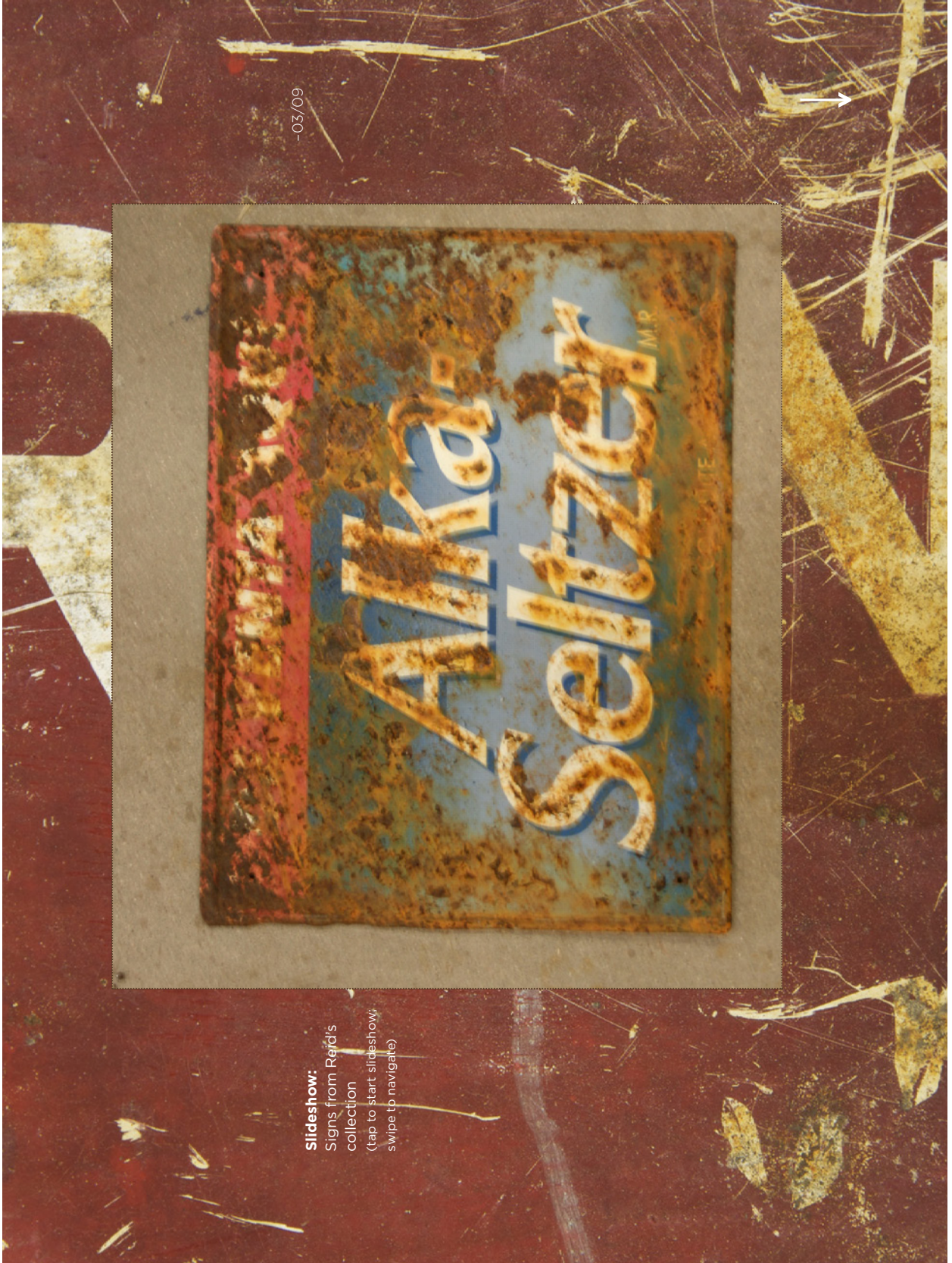
You have a large collection of old signs in your studio. How have these objects been incorporated into your art making process?

RR:

The first sign I purchased was from an old Texaco gas pump, most likely from the late 50s or early 60s. I remember passing through small towns and seeing these pumps as a child. At first I avoided the text. What I was interested in were the edges, golden stripes, and geometric planes. Several of these elements were used to create small windows that were incorporated into larger visual fields.

-02/09







The sign I was most taken by was an Enco sign I found with some friends in Gruene, Texas. The sign was tucked away in a corner with several other signs obscuring its view. When I pulled it out, I immediately responded to the raised text and underlying layers of paint exposed across the cracked surface. It took about six months before I was ready to start breaking down the sign into workable compositions. One discovery led to another and eventually I was able to create about 15 works from this impressive sign.

-04/09

I found a very interesting sign at Center Point Station in San Marcos, Texas. I went back the next day to see if I could bargain with the owner. When he realized I was going to cut the sign, he decided not to sell it to me. He then showed me two signs that he ended up giving to me. I ended up purchasing the original sign later on, but it was one of his gifted signs that had more of a significant impact. From that one gift I created *Oil, Fall Orientation, Space Has an Entrance*, and *Tomorrow's Sky*.

-05/09



549
Oil



tap to zoom & pan



-06/09



550
Fall Orientation

-07/09





-08/09

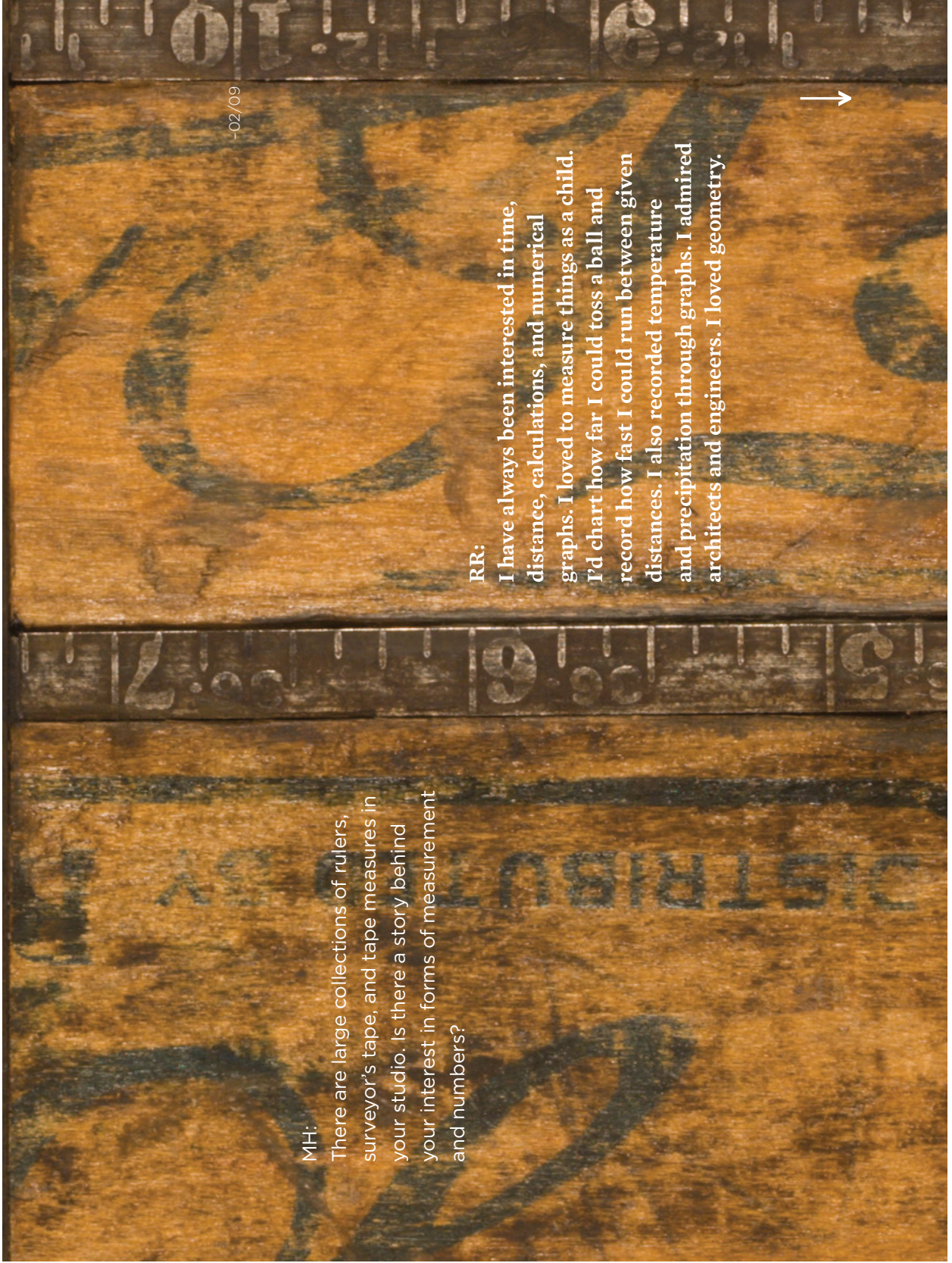


551
Space Has
An Entrance

tap to zoom & pan







-02/09



MH:
There are large collections of rulers,
surveyor's tape, and tape measures in
your studio. Is there a story behind
your interest in forms of measurement
and numbers?

RR:
I have always been interested in time,
distance, calculations, and numerical
graphs. I loved to measure things as a child.
I'd chart how far I could toss a ball and
record how fast I could run between given
distances. I also recorded temperature
and precipitation through graphs. I admired
architects and engineers. I loved geometry.



Slideshow:
measuring devices
from Reid's
collection
(tap to start slideshow;
swipe to navigate)

Your interests in systems of measurement and spatial relationships are evident in your work. Many of your finished pieces are formally systematic in the nature of the presentation. This point is not always evident to the viewer.

I am drawn to how form follows function and to what lies beyond measurement. I see measuring tools as abstract forms—spaces, bars, lines and numbers, repetition and variation, color and value changes, references to the past, and how rulers, just as coins, wear through daily use. I see craftsmanship and beauty in their design. I see the randomness of a nick or scratch or stain. I see these tools as a reference to precision and formality. As I design and engineer my work, I allow that process to record its mark in the same way in which the ruler is a survivor of time. Incidentally, some of these rulers date back to the 1890s.

-04/09





tap to zoom & pan



-05/09





What types of rulers have you collected? What do they measure?

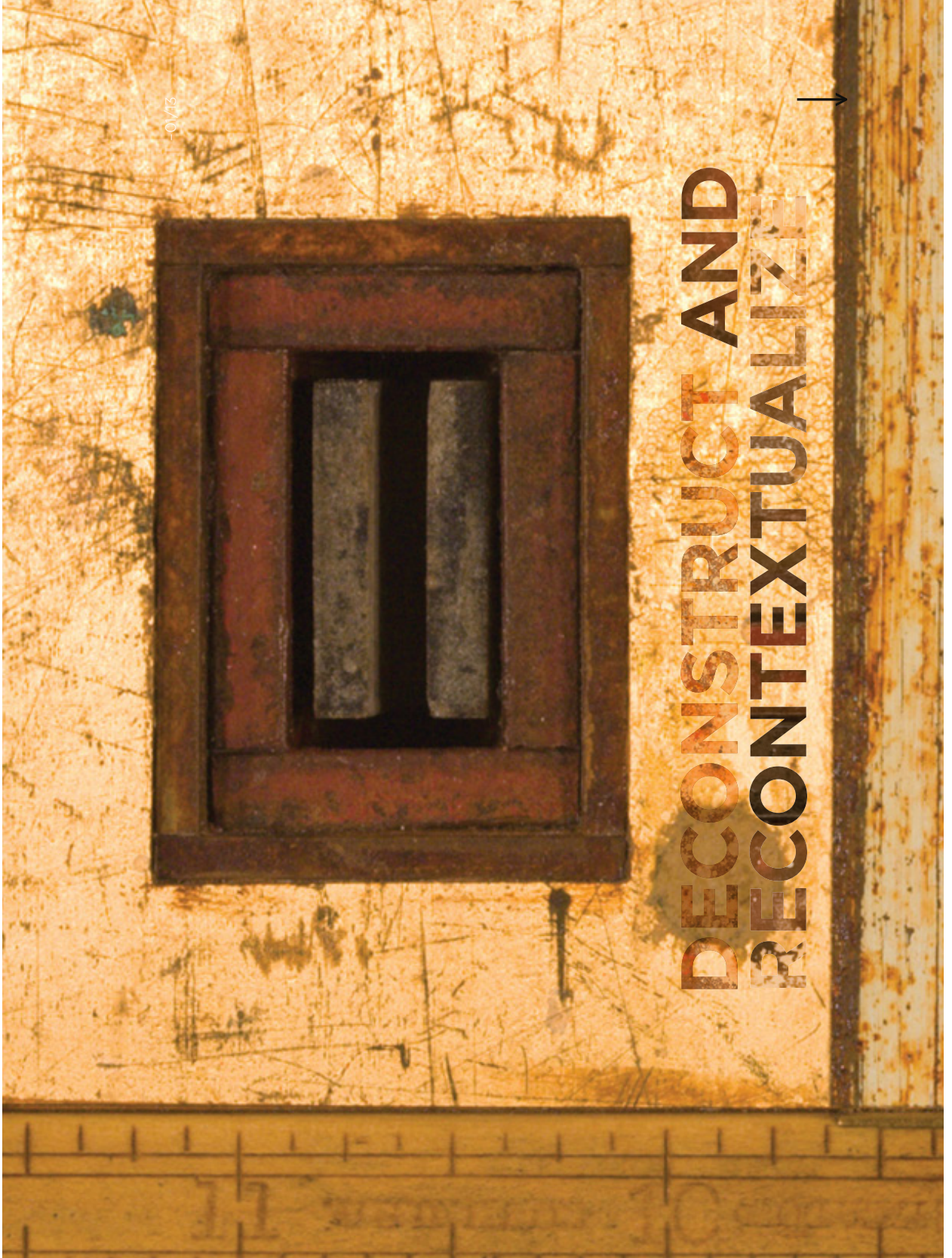
Yardsticks, slide rules, T-squares, tape measures, drafting rulers, and mason's rulers. Some of their uses included measuring concrete shrinkage or board feet, or calculating firing distances for artillery. They are made from brass, steel, aluminum, cloth, and wood. I also use other forms of calibration not associated with measuring distances.



-09/09



501
American Tides



MH:

In your studio, you have many collected objects for future use. They surround you in boxes on shelves, inside drawers, in piles on tables, and stacks on the floor. Does surrounding yourself with the objects after you have found them also inspire you?

RR:

I keep many of these objects in the peripheral areas of my studio and continuously make mental notes and references for future use. It might take months before I perceive material connections, or I might see an immediate response and stop to arrange some of the material into small compositions.

-02/13

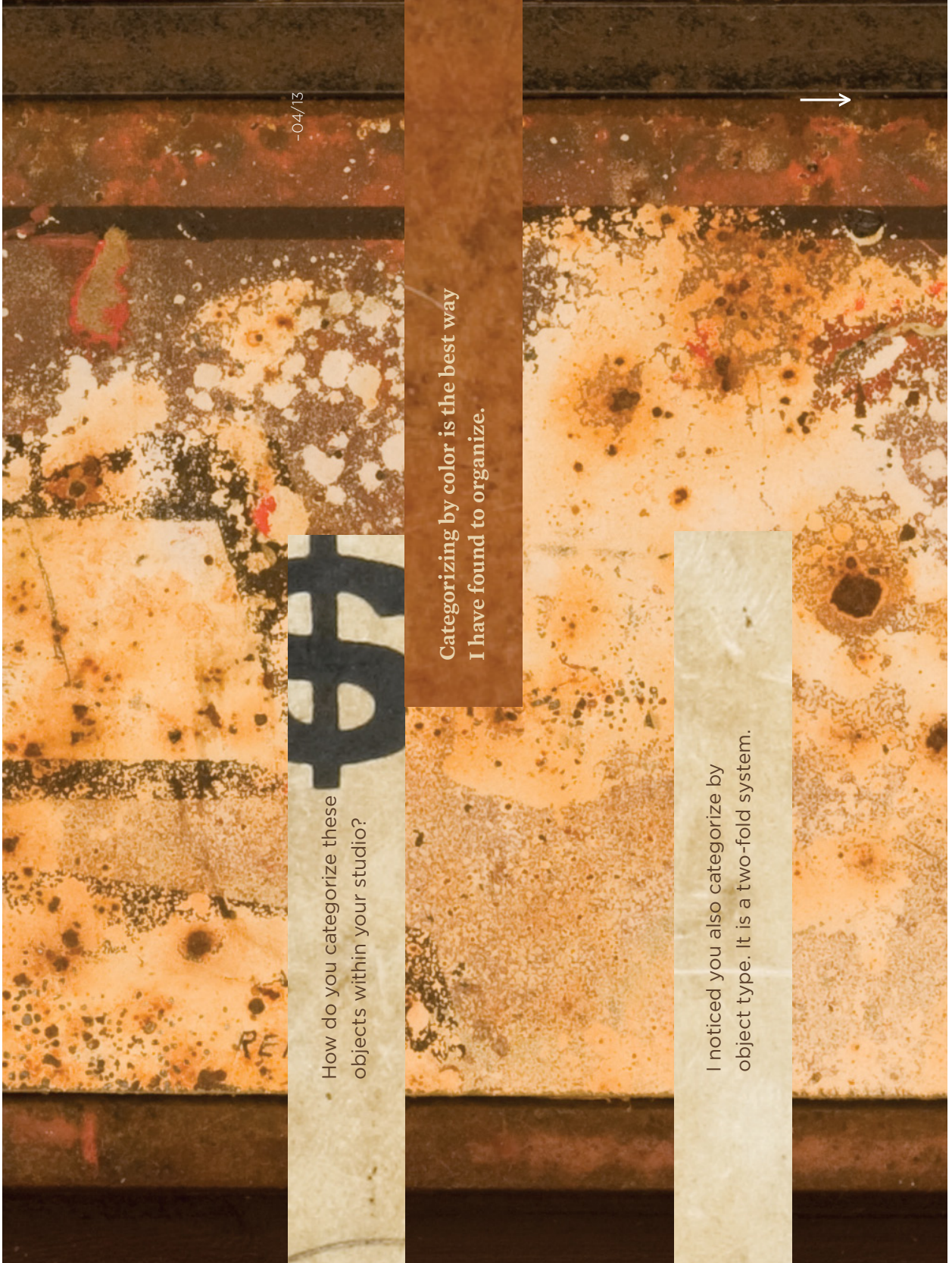




My boys once said, “You know, Dad,
there are no trash cans in your studio.”

They were correct.

Nothing is thrown away except sawdust,
metal grindings, tape, and paper towels.



-04/13

How do you categorize these objects within your studio?

Categorizing by color is the best way I have found to organize.

I noticed you also categorize by object type. It is a two-fold system.

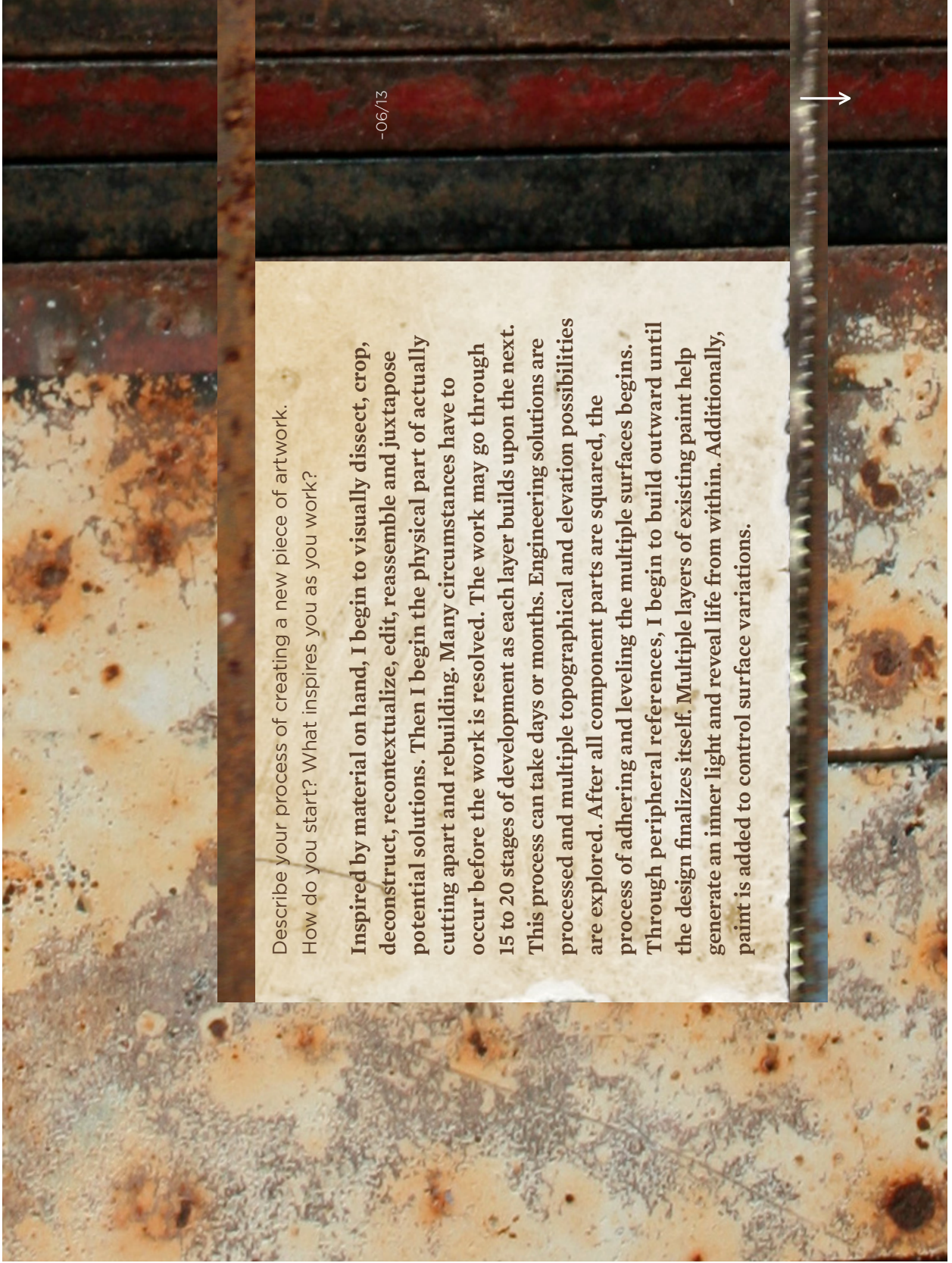




-05/13



Slideshow:
Materials
from Reid's
studio
(tap to start
slideshow;
swipe to
navigate)



Describe your process of creating a new piece of artwork.
How do you start? What inspires you as you work?

Inspired by material on hand, I begin to visually dissect, crop, deconstruct, recontextualize, edit, reassemble and juxtapose potential solutions. Then I begin the physical part of actually cutting apart and rebuilding. Many circumstances have to occur before the work is resolved. The work may go through 15 to 20 stages of development as each layer builds upon the next. This process can take days or months. Engineering solutions are processed and multiple topographical and elevation possibilities are explored. After all component parts are squared, the process of adhering and leveling the multiple surfaces begins. Through peripheral references, I begin to build outward until the design finalizes itself. Multiple layers of existing paint help generate an inner light and reveal life from within. Additionally, paint is added to control surface variations.

-06/13



Your approach to art making is known as bricolage. You work with the materials you have available to you at the moment. The planning of each piece is developed as you work rather than premeditated. Having a sufficient amount of potential materials to use is vital to your process in order to be inspired, sustain your momentum, and ensure the completion of each piece. Has there ever been a time during your hands-on creation process when you felt that there was a need for materials that weren't readily available?

My work tends to create itself out of what I have at hand. If I cannot unlock the combination, I will set the piece aside. More often than not, I will find a solution the next day. There have been many instances when the perfect fit has been found during the next hunting and gathering stage. Otherwise, I move on and use those elements for another work.

-07/13



Slideshow:
Reid adds finishing touches to a new piece.
(tap to start slideshow; swipe to navigate)

You seem to be drawn to precision and calculations in your work. This manifests in the multiple layers of materials being calculated and balanced with each other. What is the significance of measurements within your art making process?

Keeping the composition's component pieces square is a major concern of mine. This requires continuous measuring and re-measuring to ensure proper connections. How to create multiple levels or elevation changes, or whether to keep a surface flat when utilizing materials of various thicknesses require engineering solutions. Recently I have been using metal that is purposely bent. Undulations can create the façade of buckling under pressure. Again, this alludes to the life within a painting.

-09/13





495
In Times Past



tap to zoom & pan

-11/13





tap to zoom & pan

-12/13



393

Letters of Blue



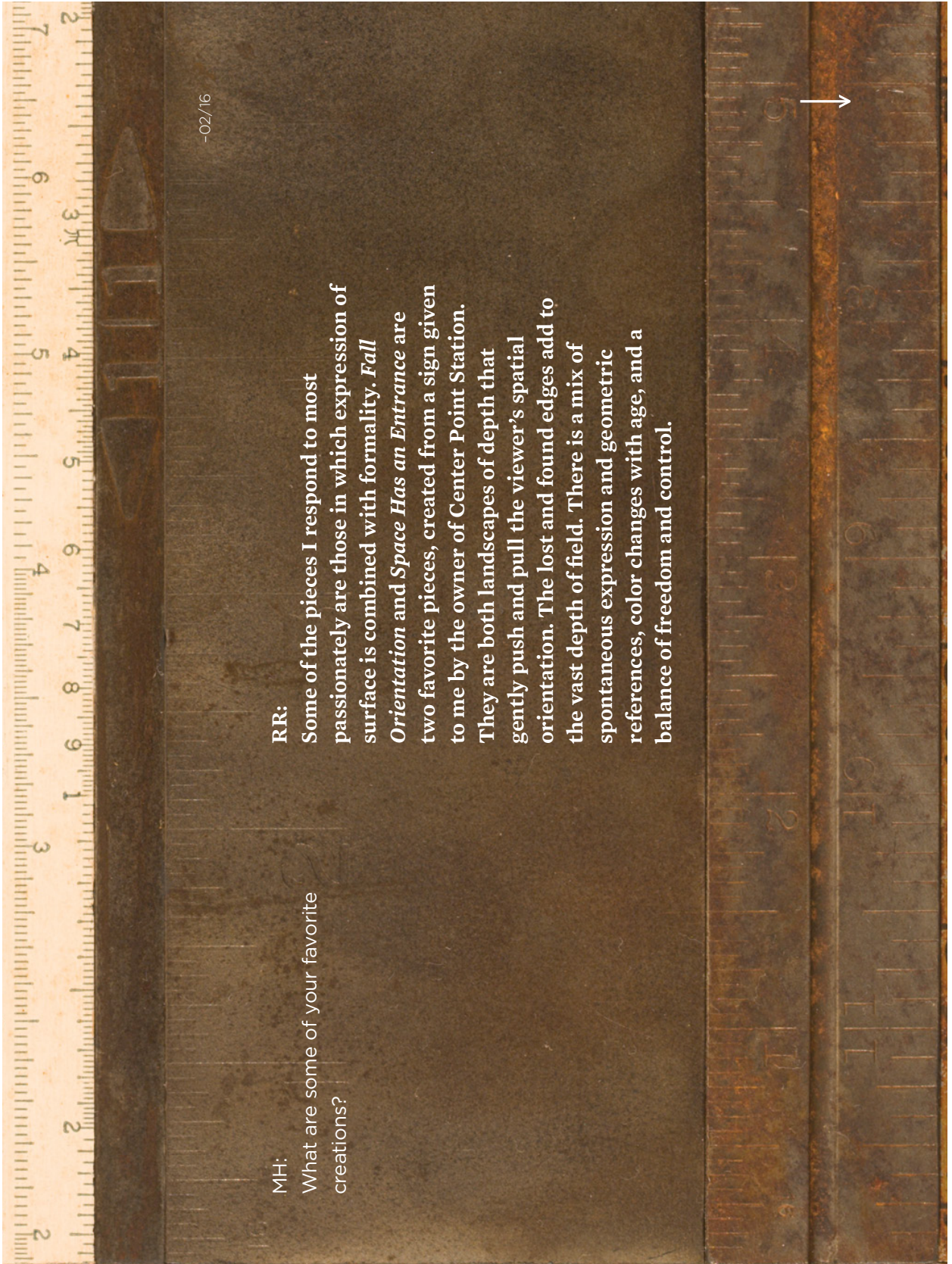
tap to zoom & pan



-13/13







-02/16

MH:

What are some of your favorite creations?

RR:

Some of the pieces I respond to most passionately are those in which expression of surface is combined with formality. *Fall Orientation* and *Space Has an Entrance* are two favorite pieces, created from a sign given to me by the owner of Center Point Station. They are both landscapes of depth that gently push and pull the viewer's spatial orientation. The lost and found edges add to the vast depth of field. There is a mix of spontaneous expression and geometric references, color changes with age, and a balance of freedom and control.

-03/16



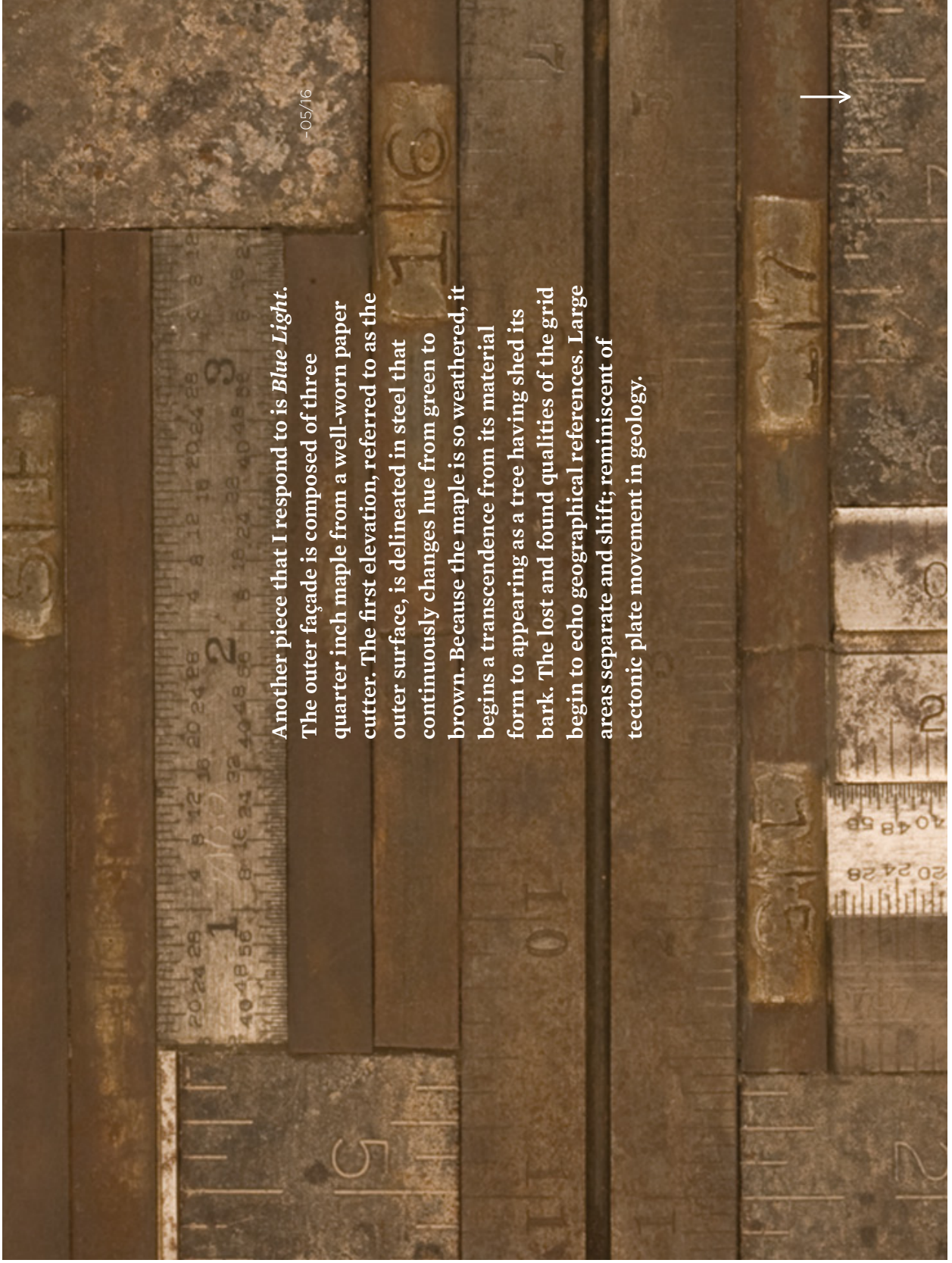
tap to zoom & pan

550
Fall Orientation

-04/16



551
Space Has
An Entrance



Another piece that I respond to is *Blue Light*. The outer façade is composed of three quarter inch maple from a well-worn paper cutter. The first elevation, referred to as the outer surface, is delineated in steel that continuously changes hue from green to brown. Because the maple is so weathered, it begins a transcendence from its material form to appearing as a tree having shed its bark. The lost and found qualities of the grid begin to echo geographical references. Large areas separate and shift; reminiscent of tectonic plate movement in geology.

-05/16

-06/16

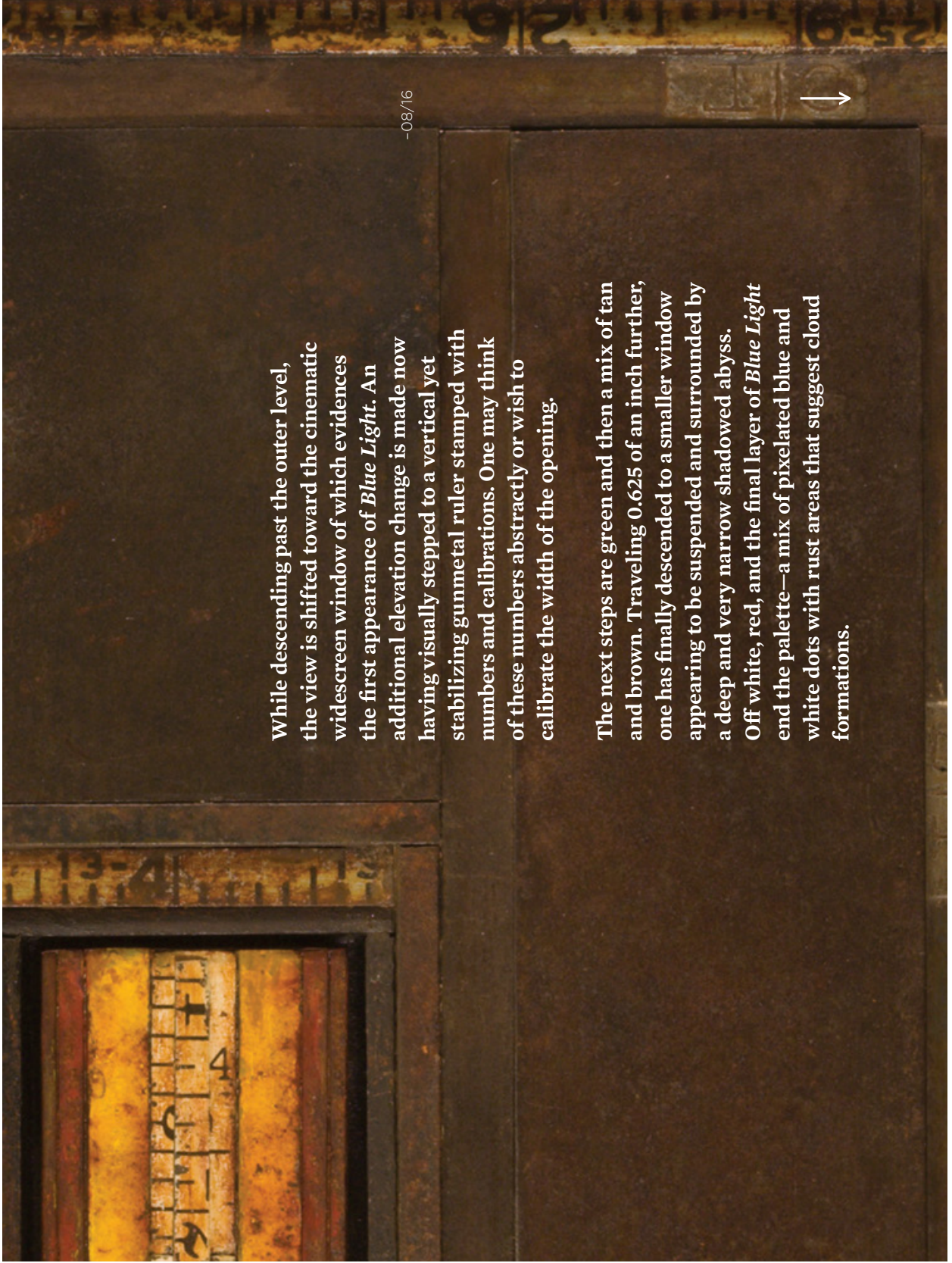


424
Blue Light

One section of the grid appears chiseled, taking on the feel of an ancient mountain range. From deeper into the surface comes the sense of light flickering from within, suggesting the shadows of foliage. Upon realizing that horizontal portions of the grid are filled with a subtle white, those parts are pushed outward, calling attention to the scaling pattern of red scattered across the left side of the painting. Two nail holes return you to the hidden depths. Almost lost in this landscape is one seemingly isolated white grid that forms a square.

-07/16





While descending past the outer level, the view is shifted toward the cinematic widescreen window of which evidences the first appearance of *Blue Light*. An additional elevation change is made now having visually stepped to a vertical yet stabilizing gunmetal ruler stamped with numbers and calibrations. One may think of these numbers abstractly or wish to calibrate the width of the opening.

The next steps are green and then a mix of tan and brown. Traveling 0.625 of an inch further, one has finally descended to a smaller window appearing to be suspended and surrounded by a deep and very narrow shadowed abyss. Off white, red, and the final layer of *Blue Light* end the palette—a mix of pixelated blue and white dots with rust areas that suggest cloud formations.

Blue Light is 2 inches thick and has eleven elevation changes. The total depth from the frame to the inner level is 0.875 of an inch. Eight different material sources were used to create this work. This is a prime example of where wood does not remain as wood nor steel as steel. Material and their sources are only a part of the total gestalt. All of my design decisions are based on one simple principal – if it doesn't work, I do not do it.

-09/16



MH:

Recently, you have created groupings of your work. What is one of your favorite series?

-10/16

RR:

One of my favorite series is *Der Scharzwald, Made in Germany, Unforgotten Past, Die Nacht, and Deutschland*. Forged from the natural minerals of the earth, the hardened steel evokes an inherent sense of warmth. Numerical references abound in these provocative landscapes as illusions to the past surface. *Unforgotten Past* has 30 separate connections suggesting an ancient labyrinth of ascending and descending numerical valleys.

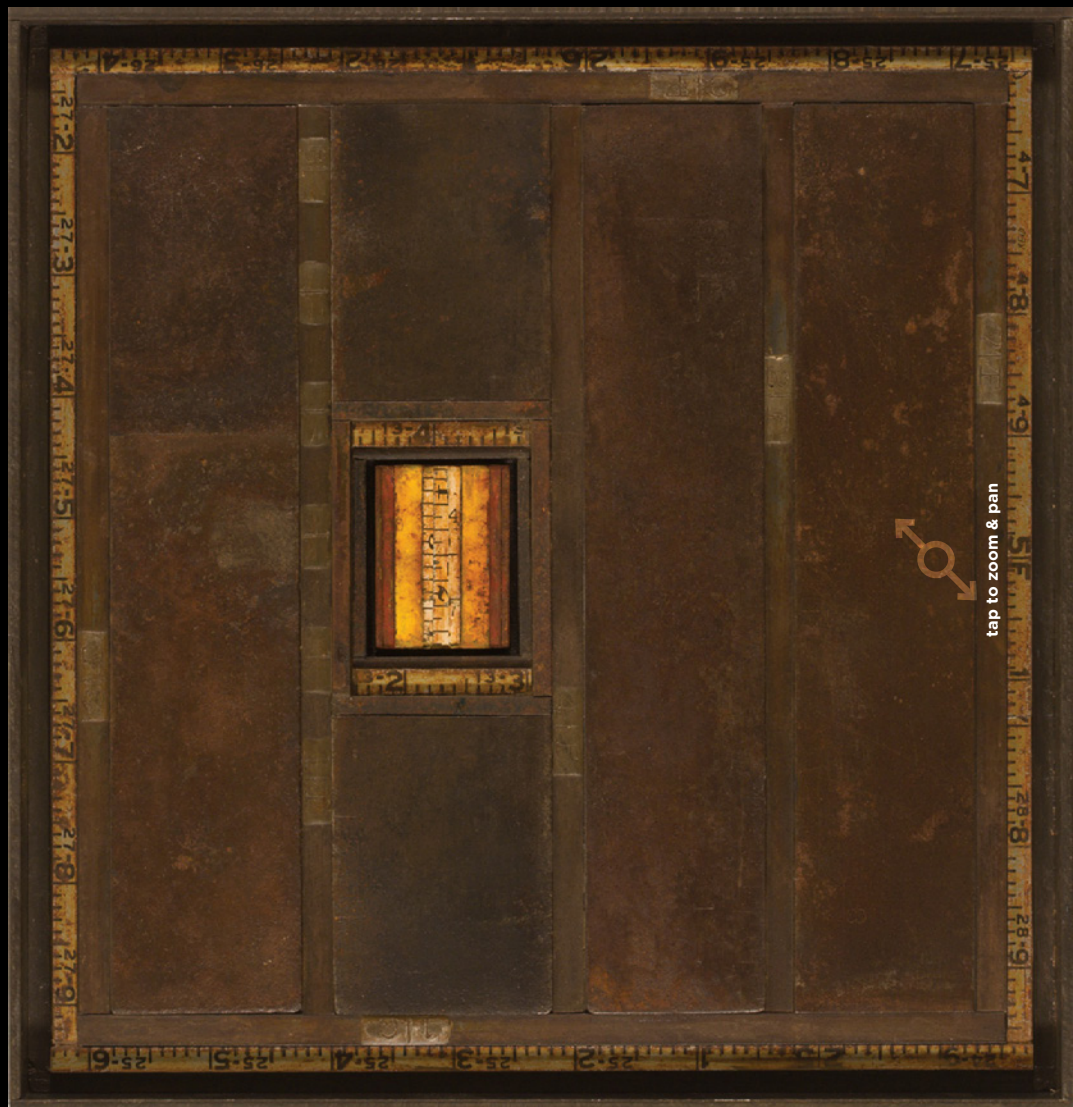


Die Nacht and *Deutschland* incorporate horizontal bands suggesting a landscape more reminiscent of the Cold War. *Made in Germany* takes me back to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution with its rubbed gunmetal patina. *Der Schwarzwald* brings me back even further to the medieval era of the Black Forest. The yellow multi-layered window offers the comfort of light and the hope of the renaissance to come. The entire series brings to mind the pride and skill of true craftsman who have come and gone.

-11/16



487

Der Scharzwald

-12/16





tap to zoom & pan

-15/16



486

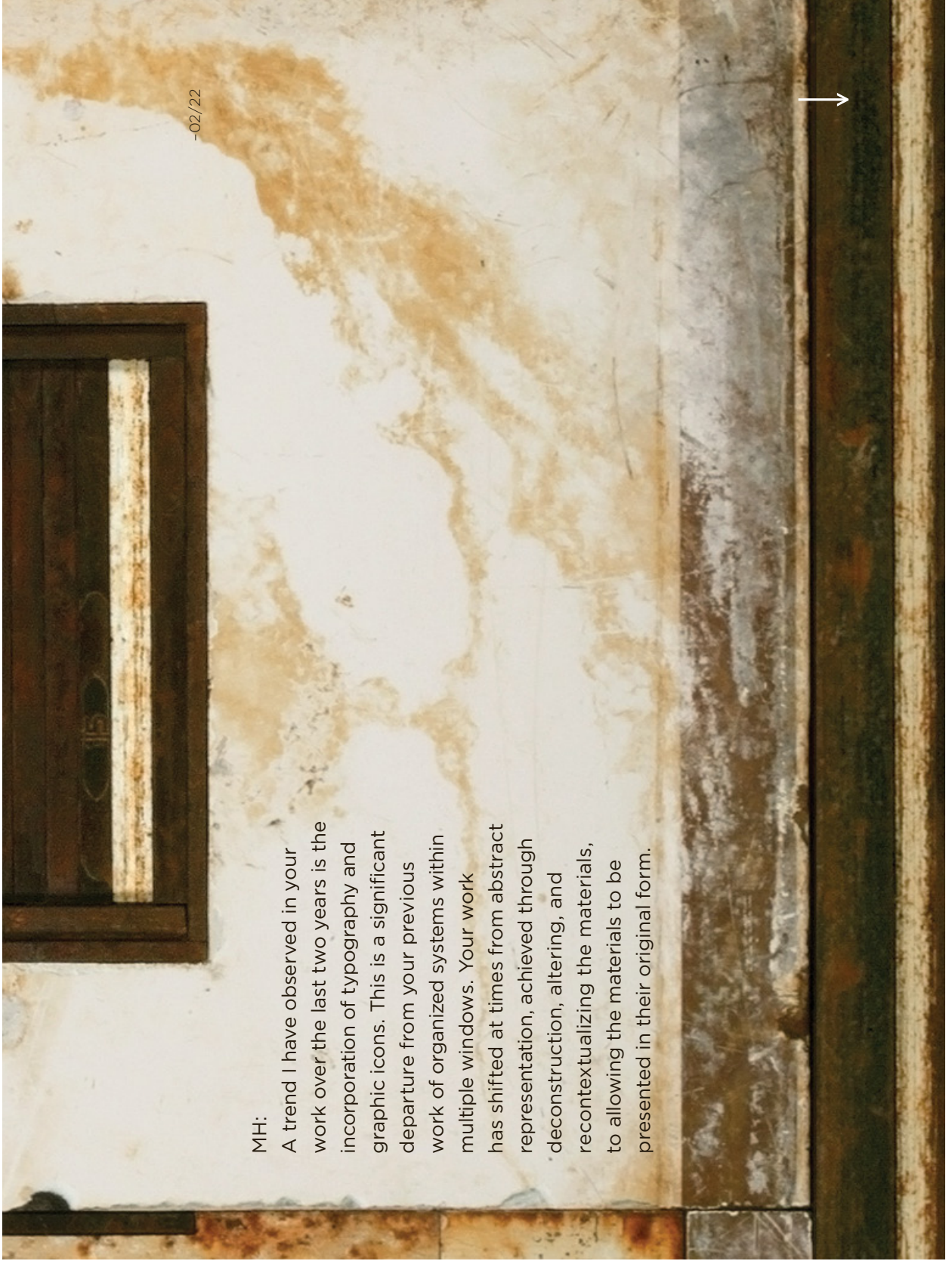
Deutschland



-16/16







MH:

A trend I have observed in your work over the last two years is the incorporation of typography and graphic icons. This is a significant departure from your previous work of organized systems within multiple windows. Your work has shifted at times from abstract representation, achieved through deconstruction, altering, and recontextualizing the materials, to allowing the materials to be presented in their original form.

RR:

When I began this series of work four years ago, I would first create the patina for the outer façade. Then I would juxtapose elements that would relate both color and material to the inner window. Now I am letting the materials determine the palette for the inner and outer windows. Many of my recent works do not include the second window.

Icons and typography offer further layers of abstraction, especially when I partially expose these elements. There are occasions when I will sand part of the text to create a descending value scale, allowing the text to become absorbed into the background. There is a certain combination of logic and free association in the way I think and communicate. I feel this is reflected when I incorporate typography.

Some of the typography you've incorporated is representational and maintains the integrity of the letterform or word, imbuing your artwork with qualities beyond formalism. In a sense, your work has taken on a more organic nature not only in your creation process, but also visually and conceptually. Rather than deconstructing the materials beyond recognition, you are allowing the viewer to make a visual connection to the known world around them. In essence, the familiarity of the materials now takes on new meaning along with familiar associations for the viewer, because a hint of its prior existence or context has been revealed. There is less ambiguity. What trends or themes do you see in your artwork now?

Two breakthrough works, *Snow Cloud and Sky Chief*, were created as result of using what I initially thought were discards from the first sign I bought, which was a Texaco sign. One day, as I was looking at the cast off sections, I realized that the typography could become an important visual element and a valid point of departure. A new discovery phase began, which led to a new generation of works that includes pieces such as *A Passage in Time*, *Greenland*, *Snow Covered*, *In Times Past*, *Missing Letters*, and *Abandon Ship*.



379
Snow Cloud



tap to zoom & pan



-05/22

382
Sky Chief



tap to zoom & pan



-06/22

-07/22



tap to zoom & pan

410
A Passage in Time





-10/22



tap to zoom & pan

495
In Times Past

529
Missing Letters



tap to zoom & pan



-11/22

570
Abandon Ship



tap to zoom & pan

-12/22



The incorporation of typography has afforded you opportunities to “play” with the letterforms and words. You introduce humor and wordplay by altering or juxtaposing the visuals within the arrangement, as well as with the titles you give your works.

I believe your interpretation is very accurate. I try to keep the titles simple, suggestive, and open to interpretation. These word associations combined with the actual text enhance the vein of playfulness that runs through some of my work. Several pieces come to mind, such as *Across the Atlantic* and *Girl on a Swing*.

-13/22



587
*Across the
Atlantic*



-14/22



tap to zoom & pan

-15/22



tap to zoom & pan

568
Girl on a Swing



Interestingly enough, I just completed a series of paintings that are clearly playful through color and shape, but do not incorporate text. Some examples of those pieces are *A Place in Time* and *Half a Hill*.

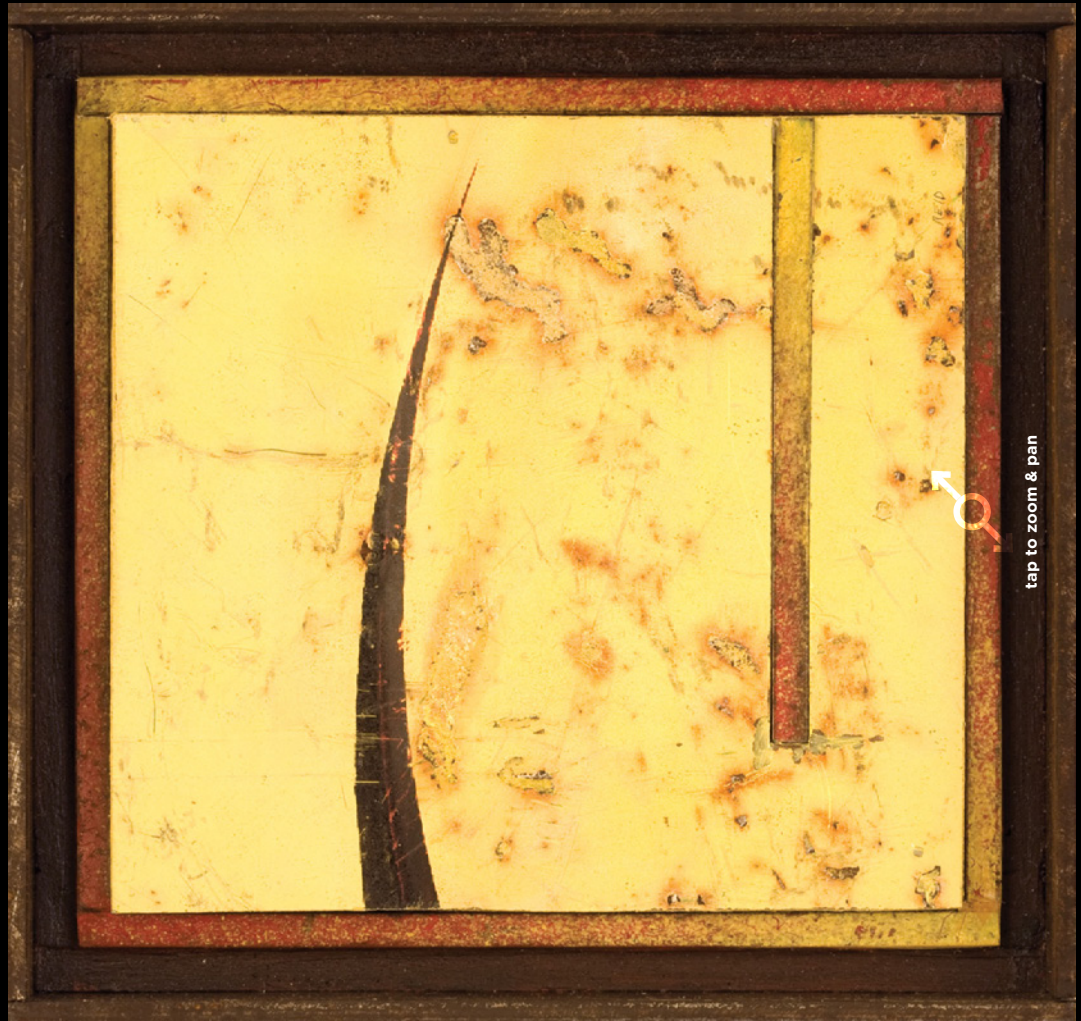
622
A Place in Time



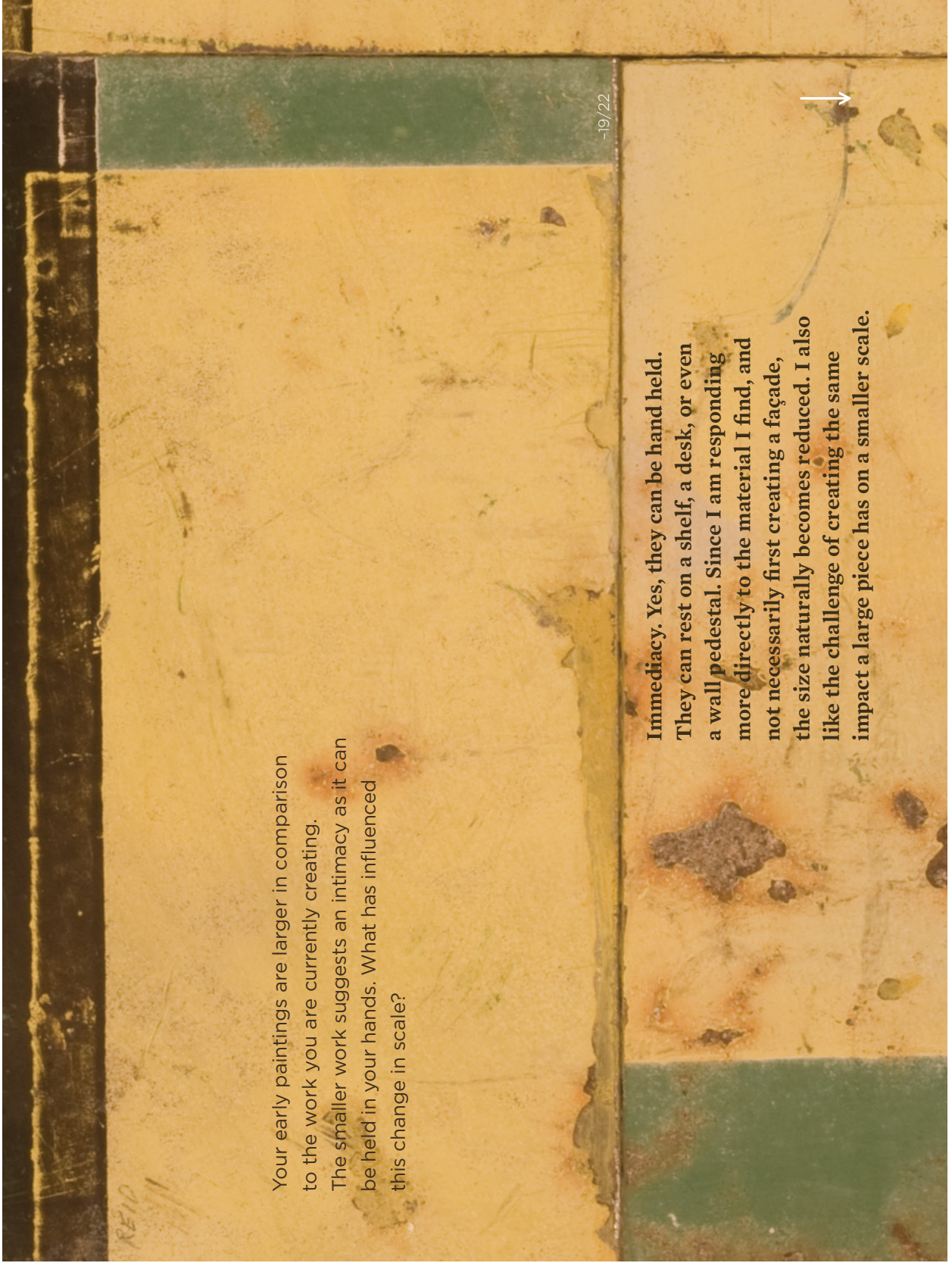
-17/22



-18/22



543
Half a Hill




Your early paintings are larger in comparison to the work you are currently creating. The smaller work suggests an intimacy as it can be held in your hands. What has influenced this change in scale?

Immediacy. Yes, they can be hand held. They can rest on a shelf, a desk, or even a wall pedestal. Since I am responding more directly to the material I find, and not necessarily first creating a façade, the size naturally becomes reduced. I also like the challenge of creating the same impact a large piece has on a smaller scale.



Slideshow:
Small artwork
(tap to start slideshow;
swipe to navigate)



Many hues of gold and red
have been evident in your older
work. What is the appeal with
these colors?

I am more attracted to the warm
earth tones. There seems to be a direct
color correlation between my
collectables and the color choices I use
within my art. Color choices are
also directly linked to what materials
I gather. Lately I have been expanding
my color palette to include cool colors.
These are colors that may have been
overlooked in the past; various shades
of blue, green, yellow, and even pink
are now emerging more in my work.

-21/22



580
August Heat



-22/22







-02/08

MH:

Why are layers important to your work and processes?

RR:

Life can be related through art. My work is comprised of layers of process and mysteriously veiled stories. It is an assimilation of the journey of my life and all its experiences. As one moves closer to my work, it begins to reveal those experiences through the unmasking of its layers.

393
Letters of Blue



-03/08





-04/08

My work reflects the process of aging.
The chance and circumstance involved
in its creation are closely correlated with
the physicality of growth and decay.
The surface speaks of the passage of time
—windows , and the conundrums posed
within them, address the deeper meanings
of existence. I use these openings as
portals to draw the viewer closer,
thereby establishing a dialogue
between the viewer and the work.
Shifting levels of focus are
established by means of elevation
changes, creating a dynamic field
for the deployment of perception.

-05/08



Reyna

Just as our personal history is shaped by our memories,
so is my art. Memories are evoked by the textures I create,
and they reside within the materials as well.
By combining raw and well-worn materials, I seek to give
visual form to our relationships with the past.

-06/08

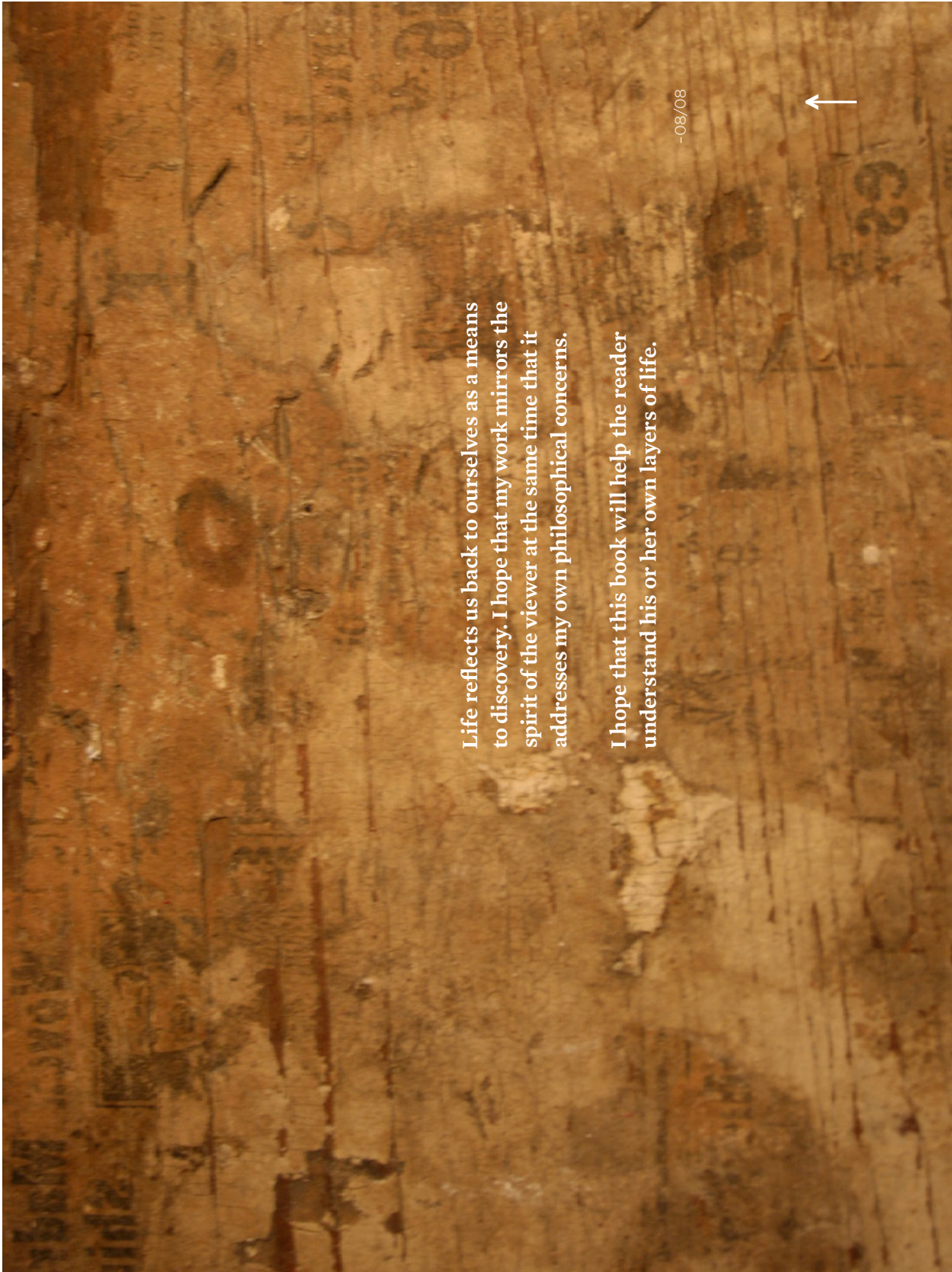




-07/08



461
Pre War



Life reflects us back to ourselves as a means
to discovery. I hope that my work mirrors the
spirit of the viewer at the same time that it
addresses my own philosophical concerns.

I hope that this book will help the reader
understand his or her own layers of life.

-08/08





-01/05



ABOUT
THE

CONTRIBUTORS

MICHELLE HAYS

Over the last 15 years, Michelle Hays' passion and enthusiasm for visual communication has manifested in many forms; designer, illustrator, educator, studio owner, and community volunteer. She has an active interest in book design as well as contributing to society through "design for good" opportunities. One aspect of her design practice includes designing and developing book projects that illuminate the subject matter by sparking the reader's curiosity and encouraging their engagement.

Michelle is currently Fine Arts Department Chair at Texas Woman's University in Denton, Texas. She has taught design courses at Rhode Island School of Design, San Diego State University, Point Loma Nazarene University, San Diego City College, and Texas State University-San Marcos. She studied at the University of California at Irvine and Point Loma Nazarene University, where she earned

-02/05



her B.A. in Studio Art in 1992. Michelle completed her graduate studies at Rhode Island School of Design, where she earned her M.F.A. in Graphic Design in 2004. Michelle served as a team member for three design studios in San Diego, and now owns Hays Design Studio. Through these studios, she has contributed to local, national, and international projects. Michelle's design work has appeared in publications including *HOW, Print*, and *Graphic Design USA*, and has been included in several galleries and museum libraries in Texas.

-03/05




RANDALL REID

Randall Reid was born in Ft. Worth, Texas. He has been a Professor of Art and Design at Texas State University—San Marcos since 1988. He received his B.F.A. from Louisiana Tech University in 1978 and his M.F.A. from Texas Tech University in 1981.

Mr. Reid has participated in over 300 shows including exhibitions in Edmington, Canada; Concepcion, Chile; Kuwait City, Kuwait; and various cities in Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

-04/05





Randall Reid's work is currently displayed at the following galleries: Costello/Childs Contemporary Gallery in Scottsdale, Arizona; Davis Gallery in Austin, Texas; Nuart Gallery in Santa Fe, New Mexico; Poissant Gallery in Houston, Texas; and the William Campbell Contemporary Art Gallery in Ft. Worth, Texas. His work is also represented in numerous private and public collections including The American Embassy, Kuwait; The Arkansas Art Center, The Austin Museum of Art, The Hoyt Institute of Fine Arts, The Masur Museum, and The Muscarelle Museum of Fine Arts at the College of William and Mary.

His publications include: *Beyond Surface*,
Randall Reid: Layers of Perception, and
Recontextualized: Ordered Layers.

-05/05





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-02/03





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-03/03



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