

"Converge"

excerpt (pp. 144-156) from *Artful Design*,
Chapter 3 "Visual Design"



<https://artful.design/>

STRANGE DESIGN LOOPS ARE BUT ONE FORM OF DESIGN NARRATIVE. SOMETIMES, A NARRATIVE MANIFESTS THROUGH METAPHOR...

CONVERGE

BY JIEUN OH AND GE WANG

AN "OMNI-BIOGRAPHICAL" AUDIOVISUAL COMPOSITION

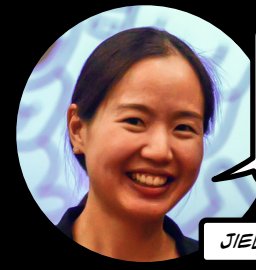
OR... THE MOST DEPRESSING PHOTO ALBUM SOFTWARE OF ALL TIME!

IN 2012, JIEUN OH AND I CREATED AN EXPERIMENTAL COMPOSITION THAT USED MOBILE PHONES TO CAPTURE AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL FROM EVERYDAY LIFE, RECONTEXTUALIZED IN THE AUDIOVISUAL "BLENDER" OF THE COMPUTER...

IT BEGAN AS A PUBLIC INVITATION TO SUBMIT EVERYDAY MOMENTS, EACH CAPTURED THROUGH A PHOTOGRAPH, A SHORT AUDIO RECORDING, AND BRIEF TEXT DESCRIPTION. IT WAS UPLOADED TO A CENTRAL REPOSITORY USING A SIMPLE MOBILE APP THAT ALSO NOTED THE TIME AND LOCATION OF EACH MOMENT.

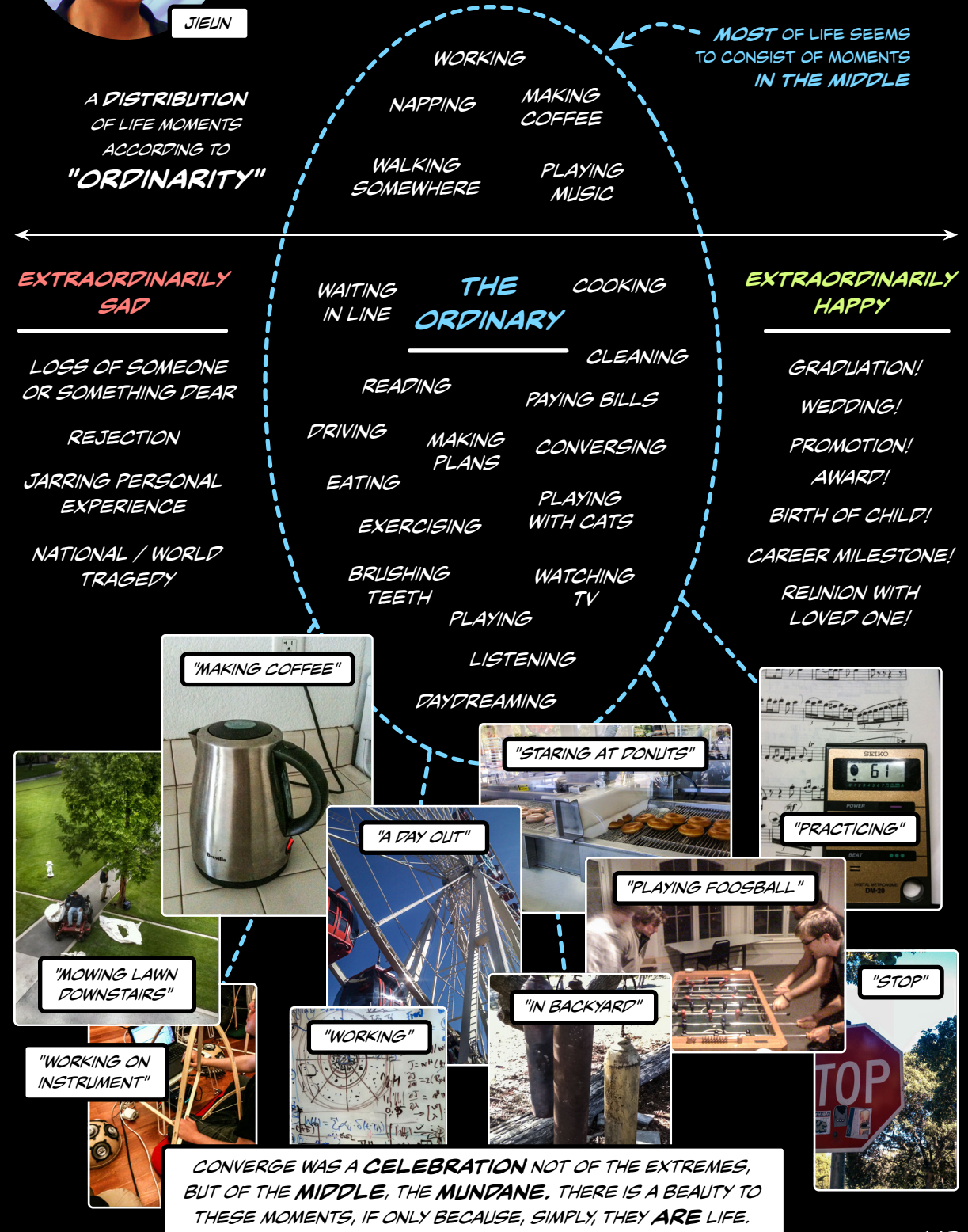
THE CONVERGE CUBE OF CROWDSOURCED IMAGES FROM EVERYDAY LIFE

IMPLEMENTATION C++ / OPENGL

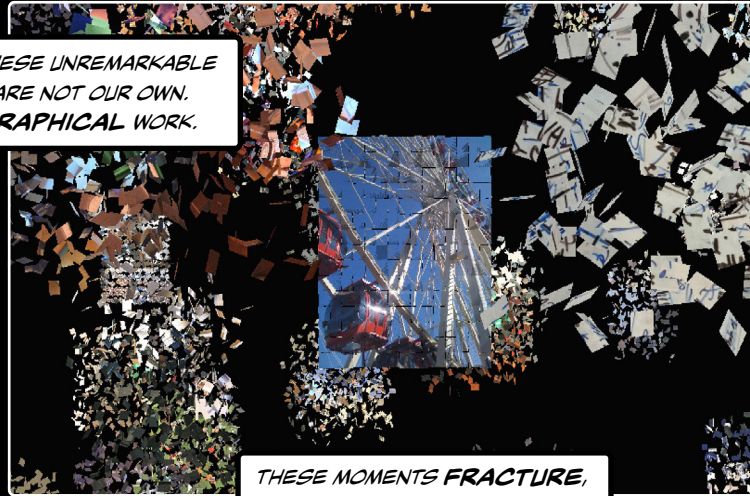


JIEUN

CONVERGE WAS MOTIVATED BY A SIMPLE **THOUGHT EXERCISE**: WHAT IF WE WERE TO CLASSIFY MOMENTS AND MEMORIES ALONG A CONTINUUM OF RELATIVE "ORDINARY-NESS"? LOGIC SUGGESTS THAT ONLY A **SMALL** PERCENTAGE OF MOMENTS ARE "OUT OF THE ORDINARY" (I.E., EXTRAORDINARY) COMPARED TO THE **VAST MAJORITY** OF ORDINARY LIFE MOMENTS "IN THE MIDDLE."

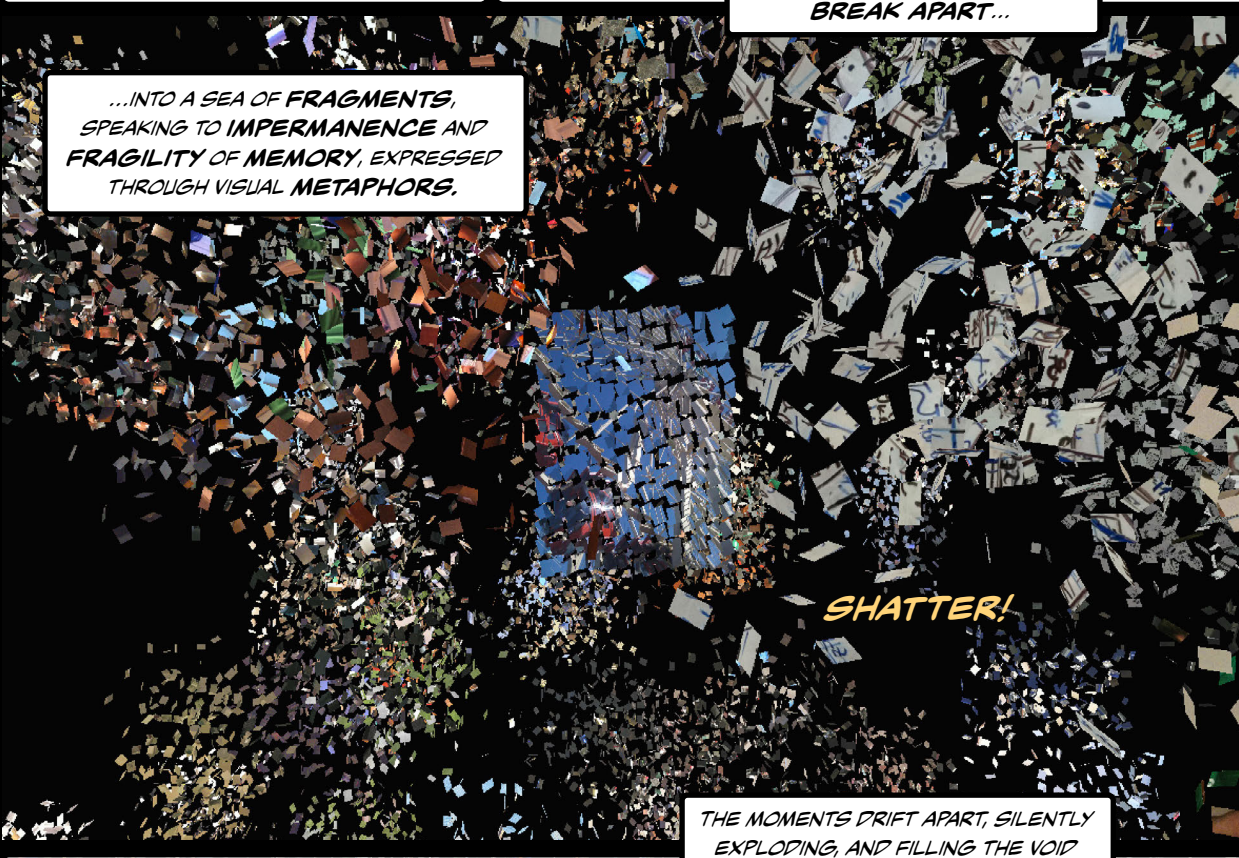


AS HUMANS, WE CAN ALL RELATE TO THESE UNREMARKABLE
EVERYDAY MOMENTS, EVEN IF THEY ARE NOT OUR OWN.
HENCE WE CALL THIS AN **OMNI-BIOGRAPHICAL** WORK.



THESE MOMENTS FRACTURE,
BREAK APART...

...INTO A SEA OF FRAGMENTS,
SPEAKING TO IMPERMANENCE AND
FRAGILITY OF MEMORY, EXPRESSED
THROUGH VISUAL METAPHORS.



SHATTER!

THE MOMENTS DRIFT APART, SILENTLY
EXPLODING, AND FILLING THE VOID
WITH **SHARDS** OF MEMORIES...

...A SIMPLE METAPHOR OF MEMORY IN TIME.



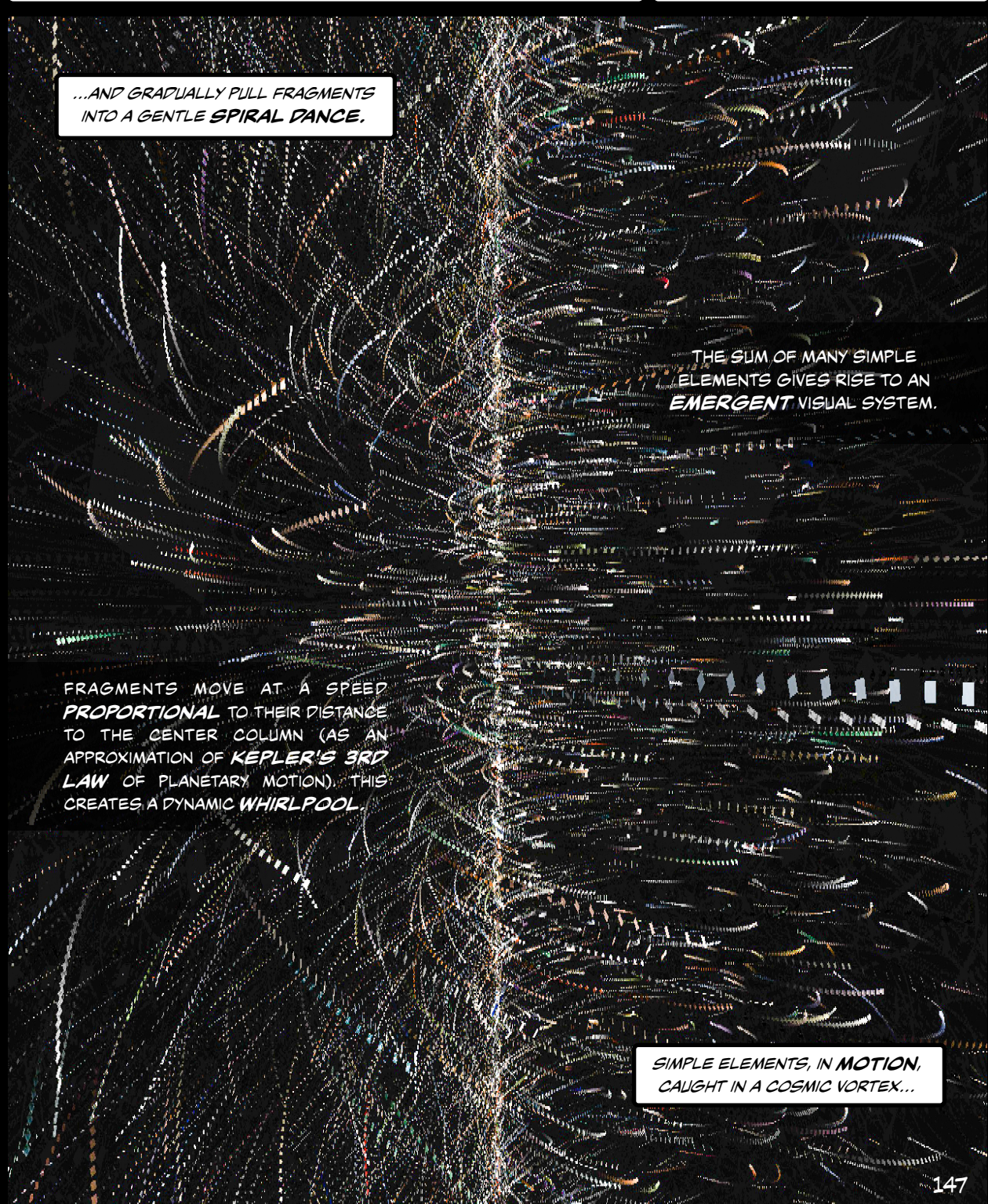
BUT THERE IS TACIT ORDER IN THE CHAOS...



...AS "CURRENTS"
BEGIN TO FORM...



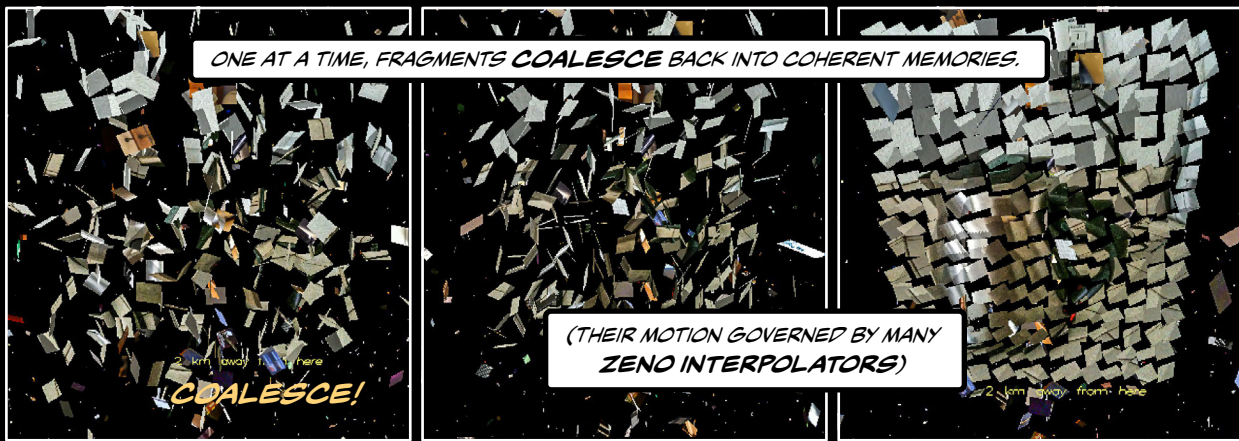
...AND GRADUALLY PULL FRAGMENTS
INTO A GENTLE SPIRAL DANCE.



THE SUM OF MANY SIMPLE
ELEMENTS GIVES RISE TO AN
EMERGENT VISUAL SYSTEM.

FRAGMENTS MOVE AT A SPEED
PROPORTIONAL TO THEIR DISTANCE
TO THE CENTER COLUMN (AS AN
APPROXIMATION OF **KEPLER'S 3RD**
LAW OF PLANETARY MOTION). THIS
CREATES A DYNAMIC **WHIRLPOOL**.

SIMPLE ELEMENTS, IN MOTION,
CAUGHT IN A COSMIC VORTEX...



ONE AT A TIME, FRAGMENTS COALESCE BACK INTO COHERENT MEMORIES.

(THEIR MOTION GOVERNED BY MANY ZENO INTERPOLATORS)

COALESCE!

6 years, 2 months, 25 days, 4 hours, 16 minutes, 9 seconds ago.

"MAKING COFFEE"



2 km away from here

THE TIME OF EACH MEMORY IS EXPRESSED, NOT IN ABSOLUTES, BUT RELATIVE TO THE PRESENT MOMENT!

SIMILARLY THE GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION IS EXPRESSED RELATIVE TO THE VIEWER.

A DISTORTED VERSION OF THE ASSOCIATED SOUND PLAYS, DETUNED, WARPED YET FAMILIAR, SPEAKING TO THE INACCURACY OF MEMORY.

6 years, 2 months, 25 days, 4 hours, 16 minutes, 10 seconds ago.

6 years, 2 months, 25 days, 4 hours, 16 minutes, 11 seconds ago.

THE TIMER COUNTS BACK RELATIVE TO THE PRESENT MOMENT, TICKING UP IN REAL TIME, A REMINDER THAT THESE MOMENTS ARE CONSTANTLY MOVING AWAY FROM US... AND THAT WE'LL NEVER BE AS CLOSE TO THEM AS WE ARE NOW.

THIS IS A DESIGN LOOP THAT BREAKS THE FOURTH WALL AND INVITES YOU TO THINK ABOUT THESE MOMENTS RELATIVE TO YOUR PRESENT MOMENT.

IT REALLY IS A DEPRESSING PHOTO ALBUM...

BUT ALSO KIND OF BEAUTIFUL -- THESE SMALL MOMENTS THAT WE MIGHT MISS ONCE THEY ARE GONE, FOR THEY REMIND US OF LIFE AND TIMES THAT CONTAIN THEM.

2 km away from here

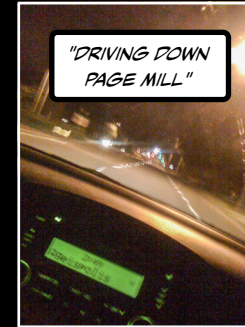
6Y 1M 26D 2H 5M 30S AGO



"AUDIO EDITING IN MORNING"

2 KM AWAY

7Y 6M 4D 12H 5M 9S AGO



"DRIVING DOWN PAGE MILL"

4 KM AWAY

4Y 7M 3D 8H 19M 5S AGO



"DINNER TIME!"

8 KM AWAY

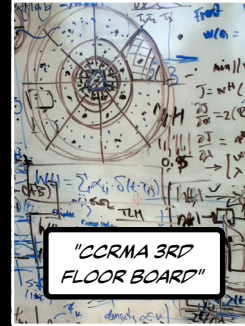
5Y 10M 1D 31H 58M 24S AGO



"DARLING HARBOUR, SYDNEY"

11942 KM

5Y 7M 21D 1H 45M 25S AGO



"CCORMA 3RD FLOOR BOARD"

RIGHT HERE

3Y 7M 23D 15H 58M 0S AGO



"A RIVER OF THE MIND"

WITHIN 1 KM

6Y 1M 26D 2H 3M 5S AGO



"MOWING LAWN DOWNSTAIRS"

2 KM AWAY

6Y 1M 16D 19H 20M 23S AGO



"DONUTS"

12 KM AWAY

5Y 3M 21D 15H 45M 41S AGO



"STOP"

WITHIN 1 KM

6Y 1M 18D 15H 19M 56S AGO



"ROB AND NICK"

NEARBY

5Y 9M 8D 22H 36M 3S AGO



"MY KEY TO SUCCESS!"

2 KM AWAY

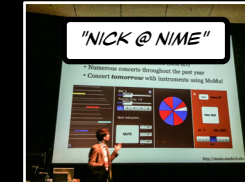
6Y 7M 21D 1H 53M 14S AGO



"PLAYING FOOSBALL"

RIGHT HERE

6Y 0M 26D 22H 29M 5S AGO



"NICK @ NIME"

11963 KM AWAY

6Y 1M 18D 15H 19M 56S AGO



"THE DISH, STANFORD"

3 KM AWAY

7Y 3M 23D 14H 19M 6S AGO



"COOING"

12 KM AWAY

6Y 7M 21D 1H 53M 14S AGO



"NOON KNOLL STROLL"

RIGHT HERE

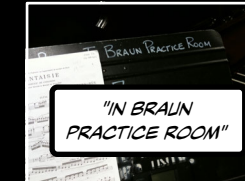
6Y 0M 18D 16H 23M 11S AGO



"ISAAC AND ROB"

NEARBY

5Y 8M 8D 21H 2M 18S AGO



"IN BRAIN PRACTICE ROOM"

WITHIN 1 KM

3Y 11M 2D 23H 8M 37S AGO



"IN BACKYARD"

RIGHT HERE

5Y 1M 4D 10H 56M 32S AGO



"MICHAEL @ EG"

95 KM AWAY

6Y 1M 12D 16H 12M 30S AGO



"REHEARSING WITH SLORK"

WITHIN 1 KM



FROM TIME TO TIME, WE ARE FLOODED BY MEMORIES AND MOMENTS, LIKE A STRUCTURE EMERGING OUT OF A SNOWSTORM.

WE FLY INTO THE STRUCTURE, A WAREHOUSE OF MEMORIES, THE BRICKS AND MORTAR OF EVERYDAY LIFE.

AS MYSTERIOUSLY AS IT APPEARS, THE MEMORY WAREHOUSE VANISHES, LEAVING BEHIND A TORRENT OF IMAGE FRAGMENTS, REVOLVING IN A HURRICANE, GRACEFUL AND UNSTOPPABLE....

...A WARPED EXCERPT OF SAMUEL BARBER'S ADAGIO PLAYS, WITH ITS SENSATION OF ENDLESSLY RISING AND TURNING...

...AS DAY GIVES WAY TO NIGHT.

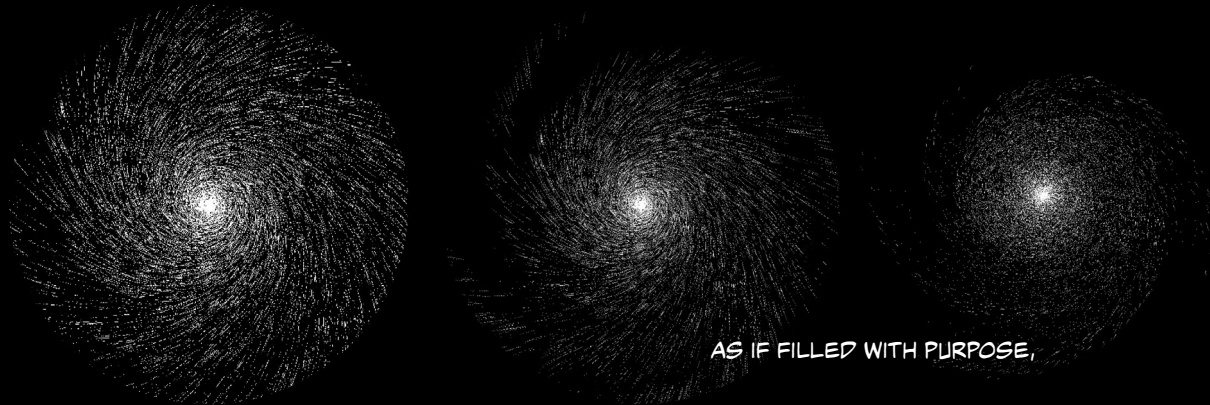


AS WE ZOOM FURTHER AWAY, IMAGE FRAGMENTS TURN INTO STARS, SWIRLING IN A GALAXY OF MEMORIES.

COMPOSED OF EVERYDAY IMAGES, THE SPIRAL FORMS VISUALLY FROM THE DIFFERENCE IN ROTATIONAL SPEEDS, AS A FUNCTION OF DISTANCE FROM THE CENTER.

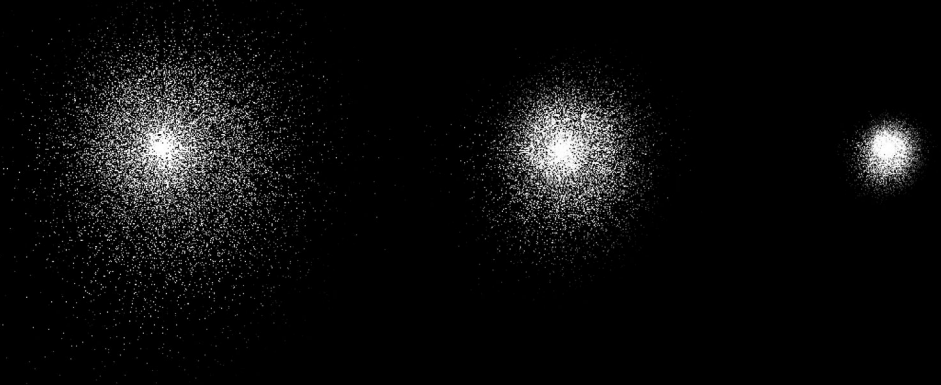


THIS IS WHERE OUR COLLECTIVE
MEMORIES CONVERGE...



AS IF FILLED WITH PURPOSE,

THE STARS BEGIN TO COLLAPSE...



UNTIL THE STARS *CONVERGE*
TO A *SINGLE POINT*



THEN... *SILENCE.*



MEANWHILE, THE SOUND IS REDUCED TO THE SIMPLEST AND PUREST
OF TONES... A SMALL, *FRAIL SINUSOID.* THE BUILDING BLOCK OF
SOUND, IT IS THE SONIC ANALOGUE OF SIMPLICITY ITSELF.

SUDDENLY...

AS SOUNDLESS AS SPACE,
THE POINT EXPLODES!

A BIG BANG OF LIFE
MOMENTS. CONFUSED.
VIOLENT. ALIVE.

FRAGMENTS OF
MEMORIES GUSH OUT.



(YEAH... THIS IS SOME CRAZY
F%CKED-UP PHOTO ALBUM)

THE EXPLOSION STABILIZES, AND LIKE
THE SKIES AFTER A STORM, IT CLEARS.

A PEACEFUL CHIME PLAYS
(RECORDED FROM A REHEARSAL) AS
MEMORIES COME BACK INTO FOCUS.



WHEN WE THINK BACK ON A FAVORITE
TIME OR PERSON, IT'S OFTEN **NOT**
THE CATAclysmically GOOD OR BAD
THAT WE REMEMBER, BUT THE SIMPLE,
EVERYDAY MOMENTS: TALKING
WITH A LOVED ONE, SHARING A MEAL
-- IN THE MIDST OF EVERYDAY LIFE.

THE IMAGES COALESCE, EXCEPT
THIS TIME, IT'S NOT ONLY ONE IMAGE...

...BUT ALL OF THEM.



THE FRAGMENTS -- INFINITESIMAL AND YET INFINITE REPRESENTATIONS OF MEMORY OF EVERY SMALL NOTHING -- COALESCE, BUT ONLY BRIEFLY...

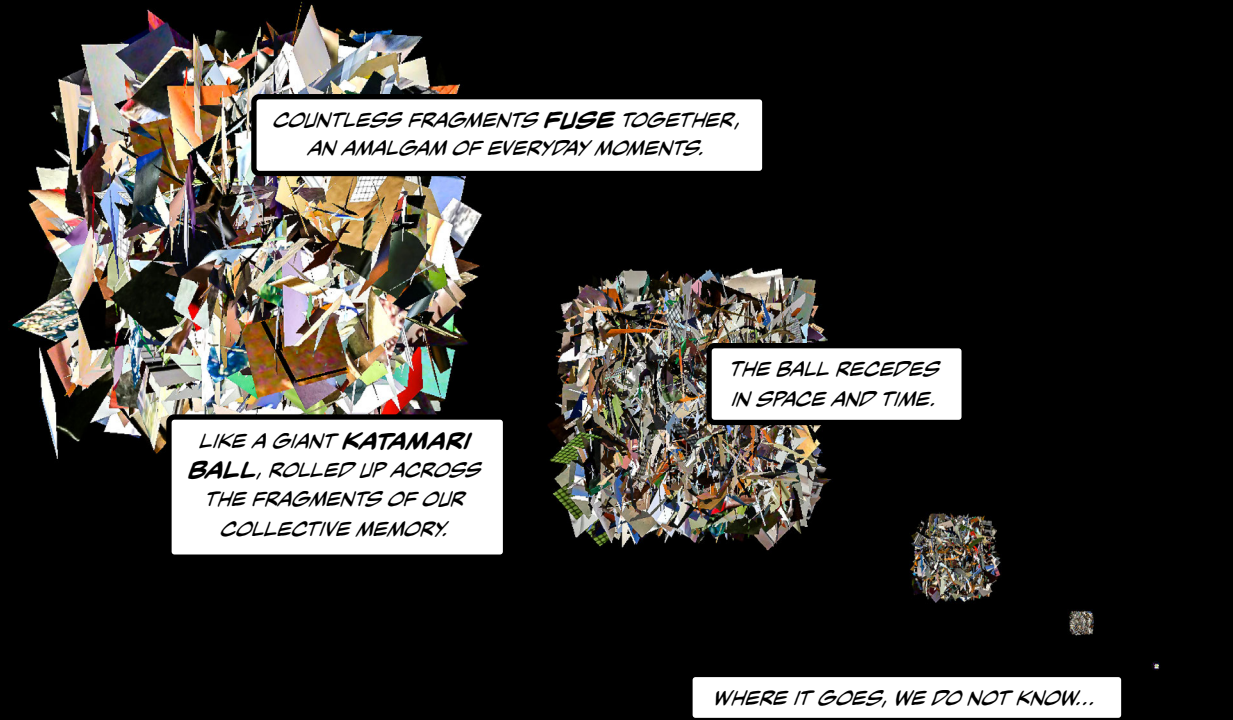


BEFORE THEY CRUMPLE...



...IN THE EPHEMERALITY OF TIME.

ALL THE PIECES COLLAPSE AND GATHER...

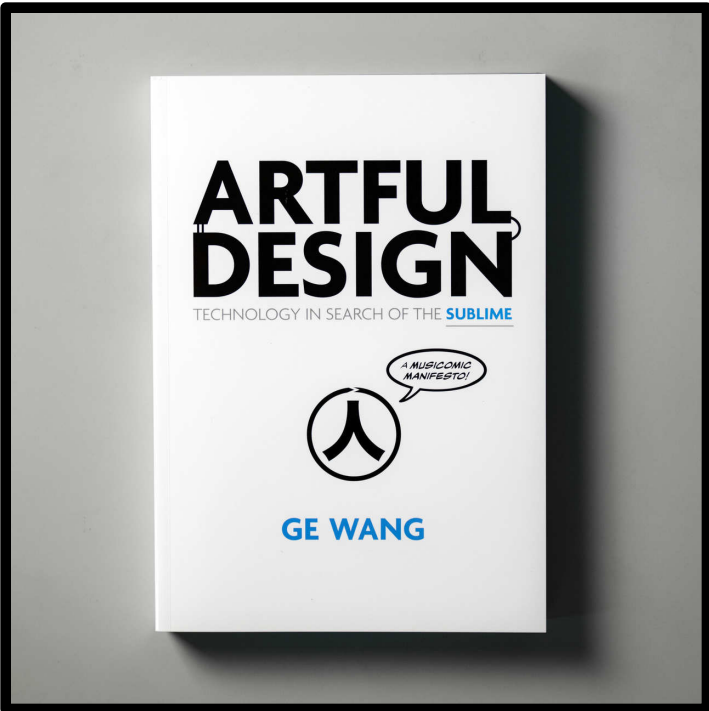


COUNTLESS FRAGMENTS FUSE TOGETHER, AN AMALGAM OF EVERYDAY MOMENTS.

LIKE A GIANT KATAMARI BALL, ROLLED UP ACROSS THE FRAGMENTS OF OUR COLLECTIVE MEMORY.

THE BALL RECEDES IN SPACE AND TIME.

WHERE IT GOES, WE DO NOT KNOW...



ARTFUL DESIGN

TECHNOLOGY IN SEARCH OF THE **SUBLIME**



GE WANG

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