The Max Lupo Artwork Documentation Archive

Jul 02, 2018

Devices

CHAPTER 1

The Automatic Affirmation Device (Version 3)

1.1 Basic Info

- **Year:** 2014

- **Materials:** 3D printed plastic, misc electronics

- **Dimensions:** w 2.4", h 4", d 1.5"

1.2 Description

The Automatic Affirmation Device is your personal confidence booster that is never wrong. Will today be a good day? Will I pass that test? Is this the best invention ever made? The answer is **YES**.

1.2.1 Tech Specs and Maintenance

The device is powered by a LED light, and two AAA batteries. In normal use, the batteries should last more than 4 years. Access to the batteries is possible by removing the 4 phillips screws which secure the back plate.

1.3 Additional Images

1.4 Further Reading

- **Blog post:** https://maxlupo.com/the-automatic-affirmation-device/
- **Full resolution images:** https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1zjUPazpFdjb4juAJj-OG27j58QZ7upNX
- **Source files:**
    - 3D printing sources for Version 2, https://www.thingiverse.com/thing:7060

The Ultimate Indecision Machine

2.1 Basic Info

- **Year:** 2014
- **Materials:** DC motor, magnets, plastic enclosure
- **Dimensions:** w 6", h 3", d 3.5"

2.2 Description

The Ultimate Indecision Machine is a device that will never help you make up your mind.

> *Should I quit my job, or stay where I am?*
>
> *. . .*
>
> *Should I finally do that one thing. . . or not?*

Ask any question while holding the button down on the face of the device. Release the button and watch as the needle snaps to the center-line, right in-between yes and no.

2.2.1 Tech Specs and Maintenance

The device contains a small dc motor, powered by a single AA battery. The battery should last about a year with regular use.

2.3 Additional Images

2.4 Further Reading
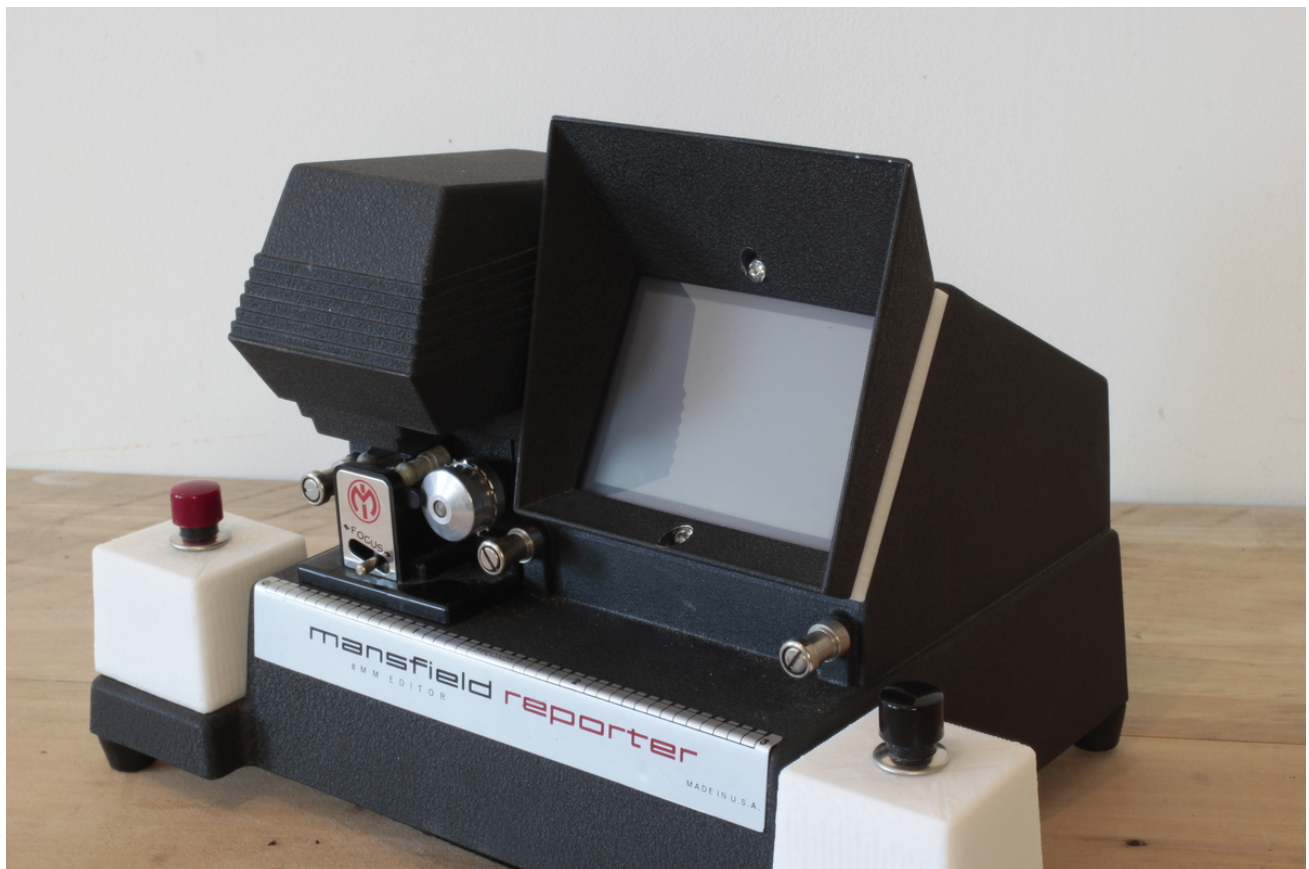
- **Full resolution images:** https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1gd9OjvEuFlxmuXLSlgKP9Og3ywLWFIPP

The Mansfield Reporter

3.1 Basic Info

- **Year:** 2015
- **Materials:** Vintage 8mm editing station, Raspberry Pi
- **Dimensions:** w 11", h 8", d 6"

3.2 Description

The Mansfield Reporter is a simple device which can generate new text from some of history's greatest authors. By pressing the red button, you will be shown a new passage from either Friedrich Nietzsche, William Shakespeare, or Gertrude Stein. Or, press the black button to combine all of the authors into one super-author, and generate a unique passage from their combined corpus of text.

The device pictured above is the main implementation of this artwork: the embedded screen shows the generated text one word at a time against a selected image. However, the process has been adapted to generate videos for live projection, or to post text and gifs to a twitter feed.
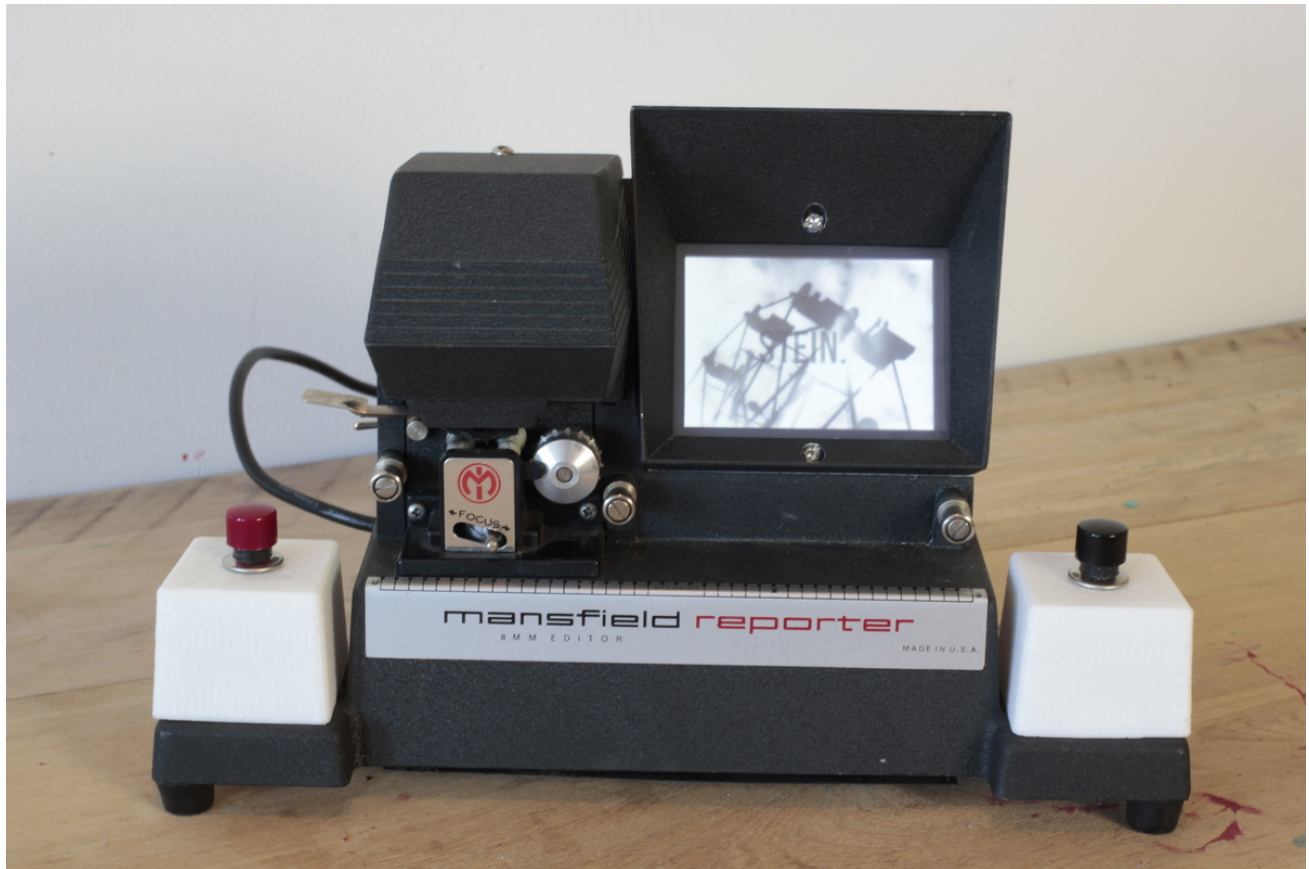
The authors used were selected both for the clarity of their voice, and because they have large bodies of work in the public domain.

3.2.1 Tech Specs and Maintenance

The work includes a Raspberry Pi connected to a tft screen. To power down the Raspberry Pi, the switch on the device's left side needs to be flipped. Once the Pi has shutdown, unplug the device's power source from the wall. To turn the device on, simply plug the power supply back into the wall. Once plugged in, the Pi will boot up, and the program will automatically start running. No other intervention is needed for the artwork to be usable.

As long as the outlined shutdown procedure is followed, there should be no other maintenance necessary. If the machine is not powered down correctly there is the small chance that the Micro SD card running the device's software will become corrupted and need to be replaced. A pre-prepared replacement SD card will be provided, and its replacement just requires the removal of two roberston screws on the device's face to expose the Raspberry Pi's SD card slot. This device requires power from an outlet to operate.

3.3 Additional Images

3.4 Further Reading

- **Blog post:** https://maxlupo.com/mansfield-reporter/
- **Full resolution images:** https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1PHH9C1Y3jwUbRDI2Ql60bMIWz6fIhCgK
- **Source files:** *forthcoming*

CHAPTER 4

Dial Me a Story Phone

4.1 Basic Info

- **Year:** 2013-2014
- **Materials:** rotary phone, Arduino
- **Dimensions:** w 4.5", h 8", d 3"

4.2 Description

The Dial Me a Story Phone is a device made to help bring a little story into your ear. The body is a classic Northern Telecom rotary phone, but when a number is dialed a story stored on the phone will play through the ear piece. Around the time this project began I was having some oddly vivid dreams which I wrote down upon waking. As a result, the first set of stories on the device were a selection of dreams that I recorded. During the first exhibition that included the phone, I offered visitors an opportunity to record their own stories on a voice recorder, or write it down on a typewriter. Most of these stories are now on the phone, and I am always trying to accumulate more.

4.2.1 Tech Specs and Maintenance

This device includes an embedded Arduino microcontroller and a standard SD card. To power up or down the device simply flip the inline power switch. It is recommended to power down the artwork at the end of the day. This is a durable artwork that has been exhibited multiple times without incident. As there are no writes being made to the SD card it is **very** unlikely that it can become corrupted, but a back-up card is hidden in the device if this were to happen. Access to the electronics is provided by pressing down a clip on the bottom of the phone's base. This device requires power from a wall outlet to operate.

4.3 Further Reading

- **Blog post:** https://maxlupo.com/the-dial-me-a-story-phone/
- **Full resolution images:** https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1I_lah3CKN6hFKChfDXNz7Q_3fXbULJjP

CHAPTER 5

Slounge Chair

5.1 Basic Info

- **Year:** 2017
- **Materials:** V-Rocker SE Gaming Chair, Raspberry Pi
- **Dimensions:** w 17.5", h 17", d 25"

5.2 Description

The Slounge Chair is a sound installation made for the exhibition Galaxy Champion FUN ZONE. That exhibition was concerned with using the tools and aesthetics of video games to explore the migrant histories of Qendrim Hoti and I. The structure of the piece is a "gaming chair"–essentially a rocking chair with speakers built in. Using this form, I inserted stories form my parents' arrival and acclimation to Canada, as well as their stories about their parents' life in Italy. In the Slounge Chair's newest incarnation, these stories are activated by a participant sitting down and rocking in the chair. Once the participant has done so, a soothing vibe will start to play followed by a recorded story.

5.2.1 Tech Specs and Maintenance

The artwork relies on a Raspberry Pi embedded within the device. To power it up, plug in the two barrel jacks on the chair's lower right side. The computer will power-up on its own and take about 3 minutes to automatically start its program. Once started it can remain active all day.

To power down, hold down the small black button for 5 seconds. This will shutdown the computer inside the device. After about 1 minute, pull out the barrel jacks to fully power down the device. I will provide an illustrated version of these instructions for the gallery attendants.

5.3 Sample Stories

Below are two example stories which can be found on the device.

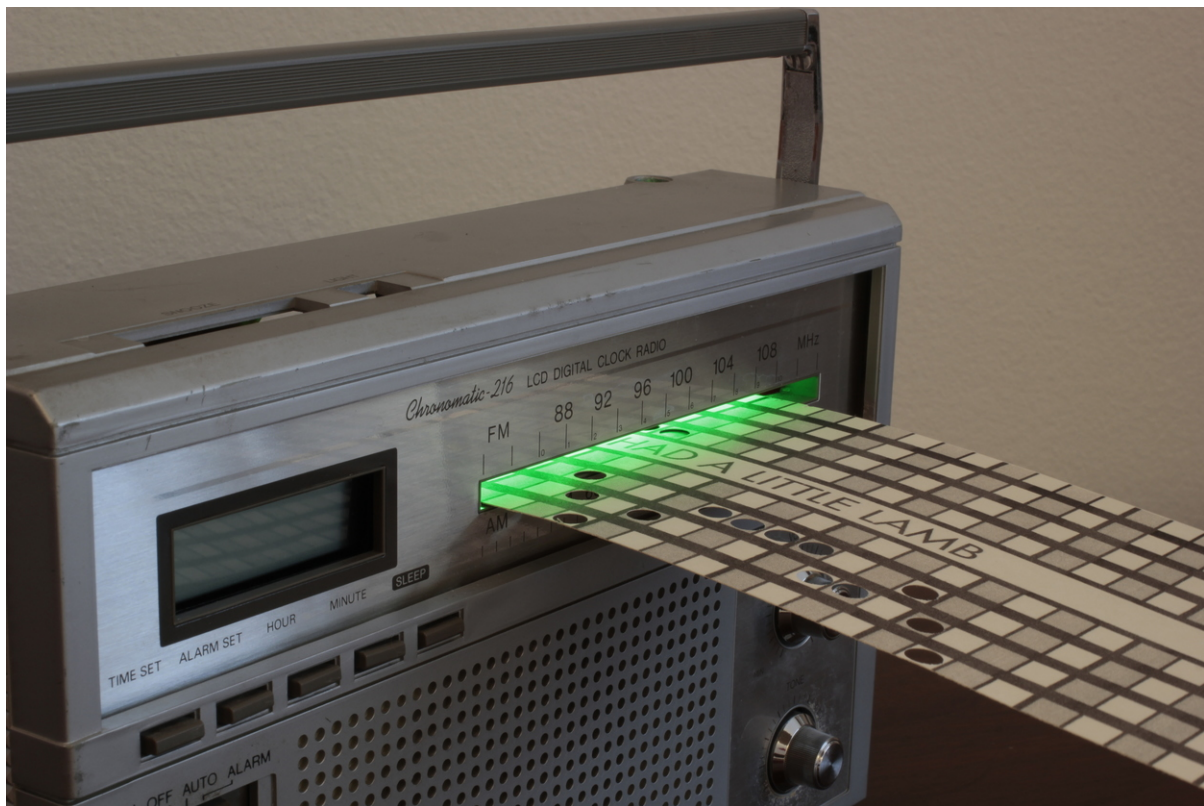Also, here is a playlist of the vibes used as a background track:

5.4 Further Reading

- **Blog post:** *forthcoming*
- **Full resolution images:** https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/163iiwcTAEeIUkCJk6Wv4jqs9rNRYg57s? usp=sharing

Just Another Beep-Boop Machine

6.1 Basic Info

- **Year:** 2016
- **Materials:** FM Radio, Servo motor, LEDs

• **Dimensions:** w 10", h 7", d 2.5"

6.2 Description

The Just Another Beep-Boop Machine is a small artwork, made to play with music. A participant can punch holes in the provided cards, which are then used as the input information for the device to play a tune. The cards can be used to reproduce familiar songs, or to just punch as many holes as you can to see what happens. This project represents both my fixation on translating data from one form to another, and my continued exploration of music boxes.

6.2.1 Tech Specs and Maintenance

This artwork contains a small microcontroller running Micropython. The device can be powered down by simply pulling its power supply out from the wall. It is recommended to power the device down at night. Once it is plugged back in, it will automatically start up and be ready for input.

In terms of ongoing maintenance, the device relies on punching holes into cards I have made specifically for the machine. The hole punches and paper are provided, and can be used by any participant. This device requires power from an outlet to operate.

6.3 Additional images

6.4 Further Reading

- **Blog post:** https://maxlupo.com/just-another-beep-boop-machine/
- **Full resolution images:** https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Aj0vJUzPZ4ZRAwEEnRUUYlsMdmx7lrOi
- **Source files:**
    - Source code running on the device: https://github.com/mlupo/music-punch
    - 3D printer files: http://www.thingiverse.com/thing:1305712

The Thermal Printing Doorbell (Version 2)

7.1 Basic Info

- **Year:** 2014
- **Materials:** Arduino, laser cut wood and acrylic, thermal printer, thermal paper
- **Dimensions:** w 5", h 4.5", d 4"

7.2 Description

Doorbells are boring. Everyone deserves a doorbell which introduces them to their visitor in an inviting way.

This is the Thermal Printing Doorbell. It plays a little melody, then leaves you a delightful, or passive-aggressive message. The truth is, answering the door is alternatively annoying or terrifying. The people that you would actually like to see most likely do not ring the doorbell anyway, and so the person at your door is more likely some other surprising interjection into your day.
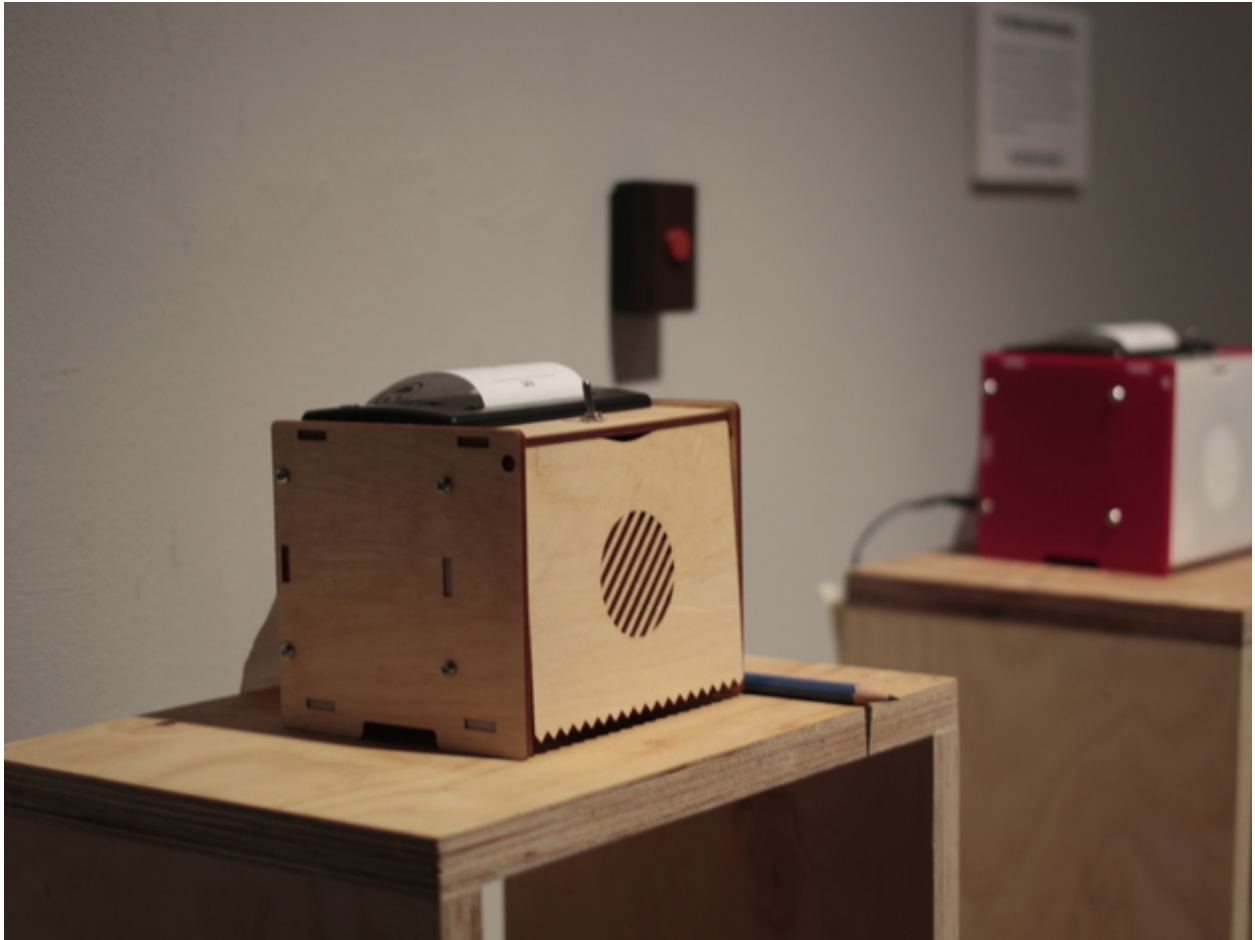
7.2.1 Tech Specs and Maintenance

In terms of technology, the device includes an Arduino, a thermal printer, and a small remote which provides the ringer button. The remote is powered by 2 CR2016 coincell batteries, which should last 2 years with normal use. The thermal printing paper used is this one here from Staples, or anything that is a similar size.

The main device has a single power switch. Once flipped on, the green light beside the printer will slowly flash, and the device is immediately usable. To power down, simply flip the switch to its off position. This device requires power from an outlet to operate.

7.3 Installation Image

7.4 Further Reading

- **Blog post:** https://maxlupo.com/the-thermal-printer-doorbell/
- **Full resolution images:** https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ngHTP24S-2AepOyWIApd-OQyAtExlTsi
- **Source files:** https://www.thingiverse.com/thing:729301

CHAPTER 8

I MADE THIS FOR YOU
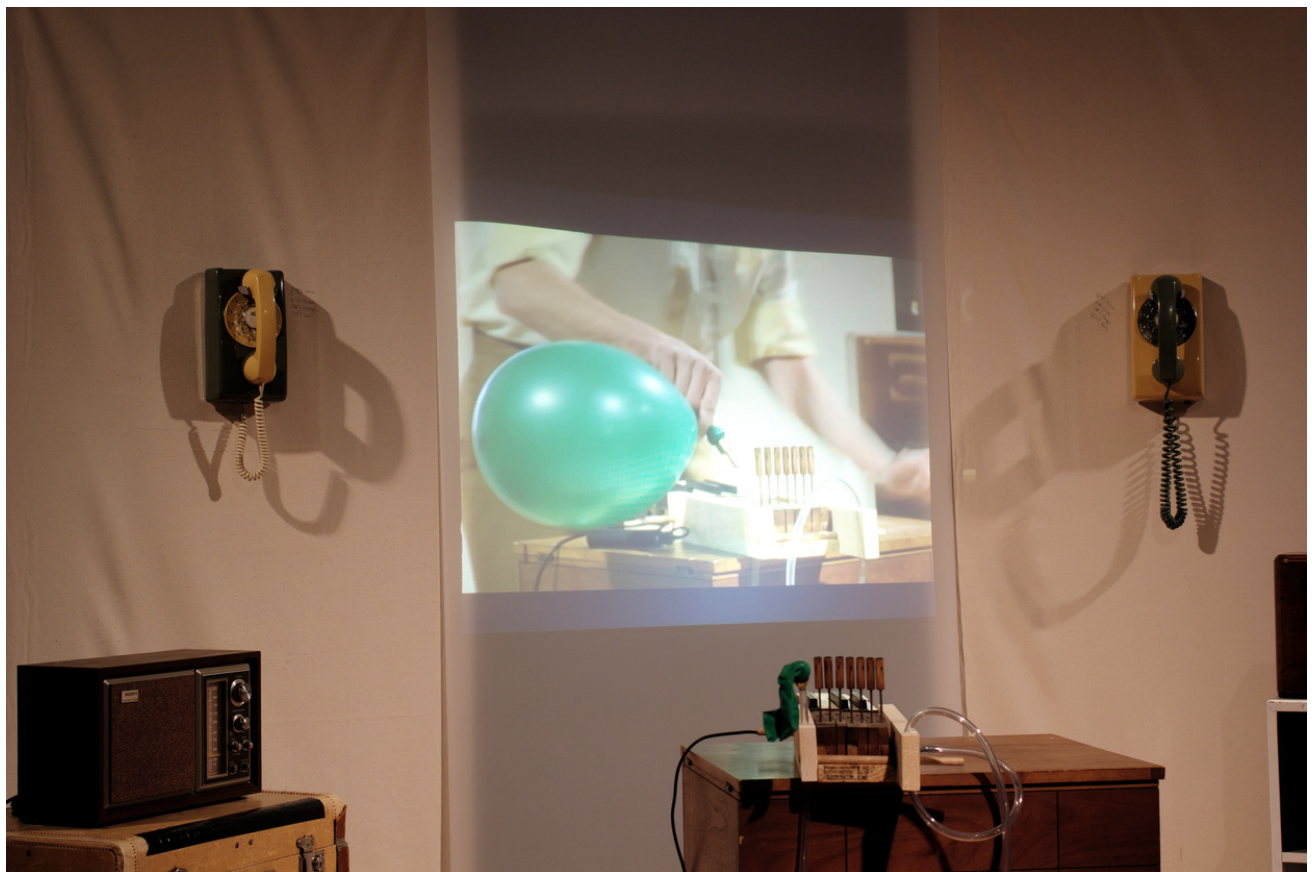

8.1 Basic Info

- **Year:** 2015

- **Medium:** a performance and installation
- **Dimensions:** variable

8.2 Description

This performance was part of an exhibition at Georgian College in Barrie, Ontario. This artwork deals with a favorite area of focus: how can feelings of nostalgia and novelty subvert the viewer's expectations of an object or experience. Things such as a rotary phone, a FM radio, and a bicycle are all present, but nothing quite works as it should: the phones only play stories, the radios only loop local audio, and the bike is just there to blow-up a balloon.

The exhibition takes a humorous and strange set of objects, and places them a bit closer to a personal context: these things that I made for you.

8.3 Additional Images

8.4 Further Reading

- **Blog post:** https://maxlupo.com/i-made-this-for-you/
- **Full resolution images:** https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16hs3ISQN4Q3XSOnU3C6cJqXF2zddoI97

Beep-Boopatronics

9.1 Basic Info

- **Year:** 2017
- **Materials:** servos, 3d printed plastic, vinyl air pillows, PVC tubes, and Beep-Boop Machine
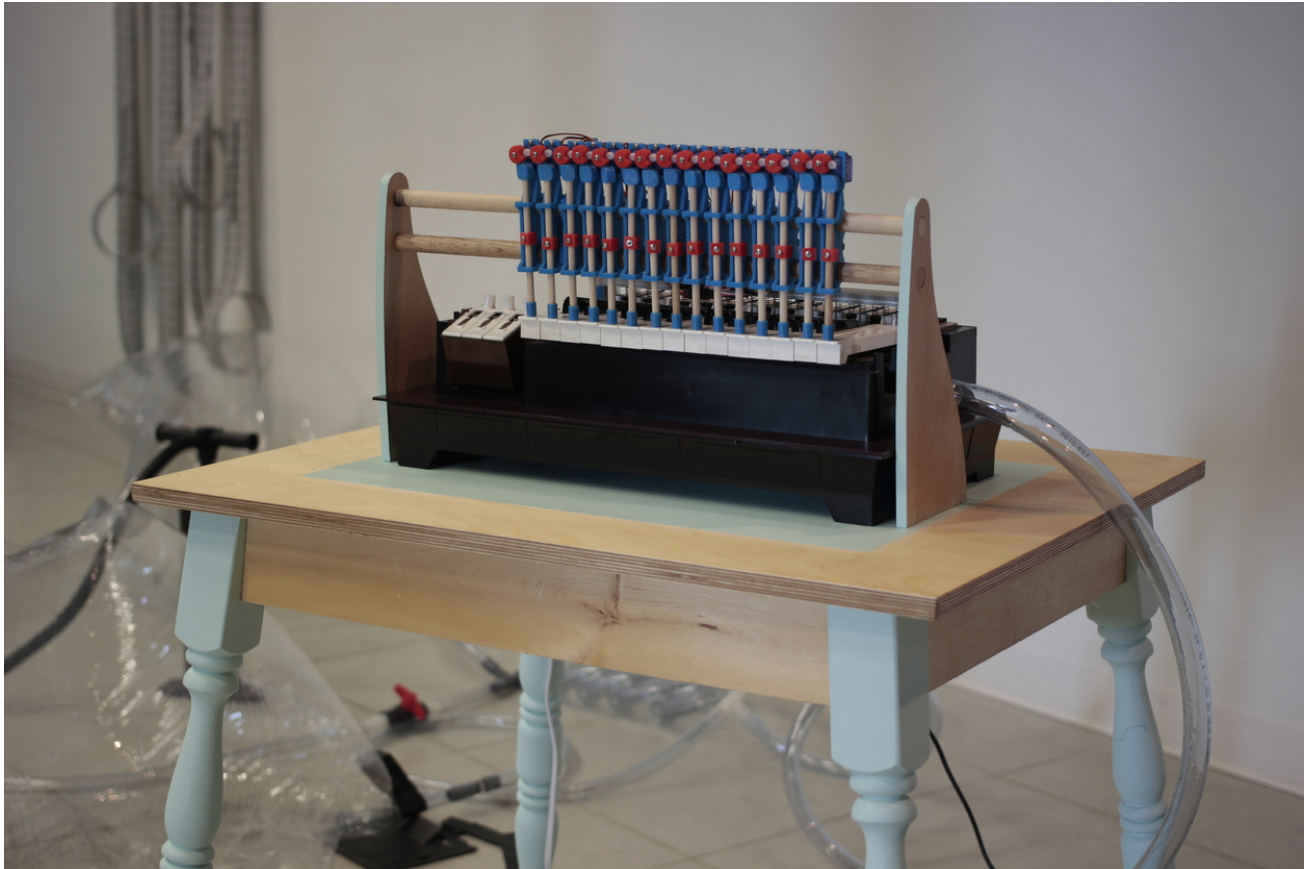- **Dimensions:** variable

9.2 Description

This project reflects an obsession with wires, communication, and out-of-date consumer products. In order to do so, this installation dismantles objects which are on the outer edge of their usable life and imbuing them with new, but not always useful, functionality. Connected by a series of inputs and outputs, the system plays out an absurd comic moment where all of the machinery forces airflow and data into a small instrument, playing an indecipherable tune. Through its are and circuits, this project explores how systems of translation and adaptation can be productive for their own sake.
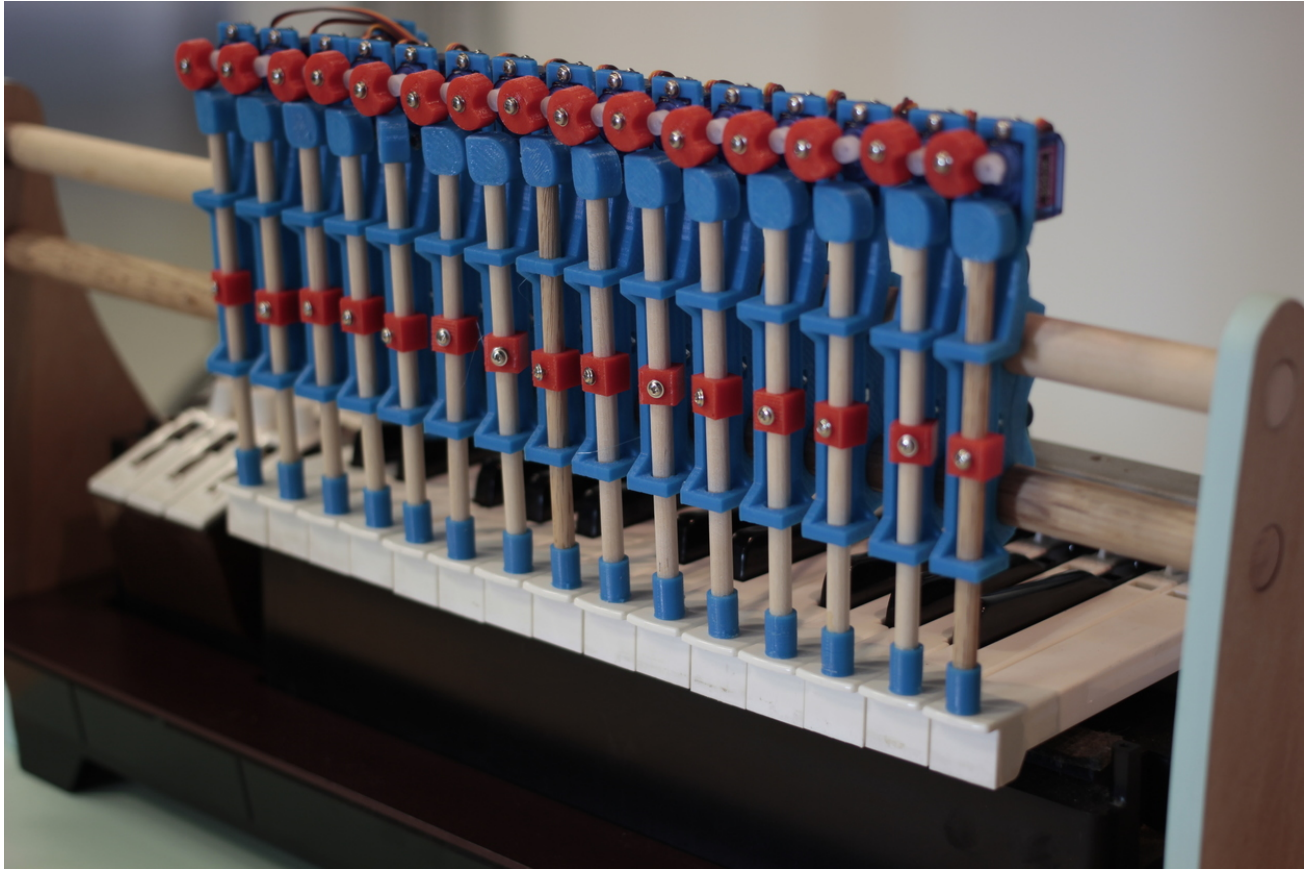
9.2.1 Tech Specs and Maintenance

This project is just a bit fragile. The air pillows are suspectible to damage, and the servo motors will eventually wear and fail in interesting ways. However, this project survived my thesis presentation, and has already been re-exhibited in a condensed form at the Propeller gallery in downtown Toronto.

9.3 Additional Images

9.4 Further Reading

- **Blog post:** https://maxlupo.com/beep-boopatronics/
- **More (full resolution) images:** https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1eJJ13gDr1zyWy0rnHU4PIPVZBJQd9ycE
- **Playing an adapted John Cage composition:** https://youtu.be/Uxc-VaRnjG4
- **Master's thesis (pdf)**: http://openresearch.ocadu.ca/id/eprint/1625/1/Lupo_Max_2017_MFA_IAMD_Thesis.pdf
- **Source files:**
    - **Piano Player source code:** https://github.com/mlupo/piano-player
    - **Alternate (midi enabled) Beep-Boop Machine source code:** https://github.com/mlupo/music-punch/blob/master/main-piano.py
    - **3D printer files:** https://www.thingiverse.com/thing:2654830

Postcard Return Project

10.1 Basic Info

- **Year:** 2016

- **Materials:** found postcards
- **Dimensions:** variable

10.2 Description

The Postcard Return Project is an artwork which explores home and nostalgia, through the act of manipulating forgotten postcards. Estate sales, antiques stores, and thrift shops are filled with objects removed of their original context and value. In these locations perhaps no object is more unbound from its former associations than the postcard–once the original sender and receiver have passed, where do they really belong?

The postcards themselves are quotidian excerpts from an individual's life. The cards are both intensely specific to that person's lived experience, while also being indicators for the experiences of wider cultural and temporal groups. In my observation of responses to the postcards, this dual characteristic is consolidated into a visceral feeling of nostalgia. The installation provides the necessary postage, making it possible to **mail the original back to its original destination**, or a reproduction if there is the feeling that the original is just too precious.

10.2.1 Presentation Considerations

In its first installation, the postcards were arranged as seen above. The core of the project resides in the action of choosing and returning a postcard, and as such the specific arrangement of the cards can be completely changed to suit new exhibition environments.
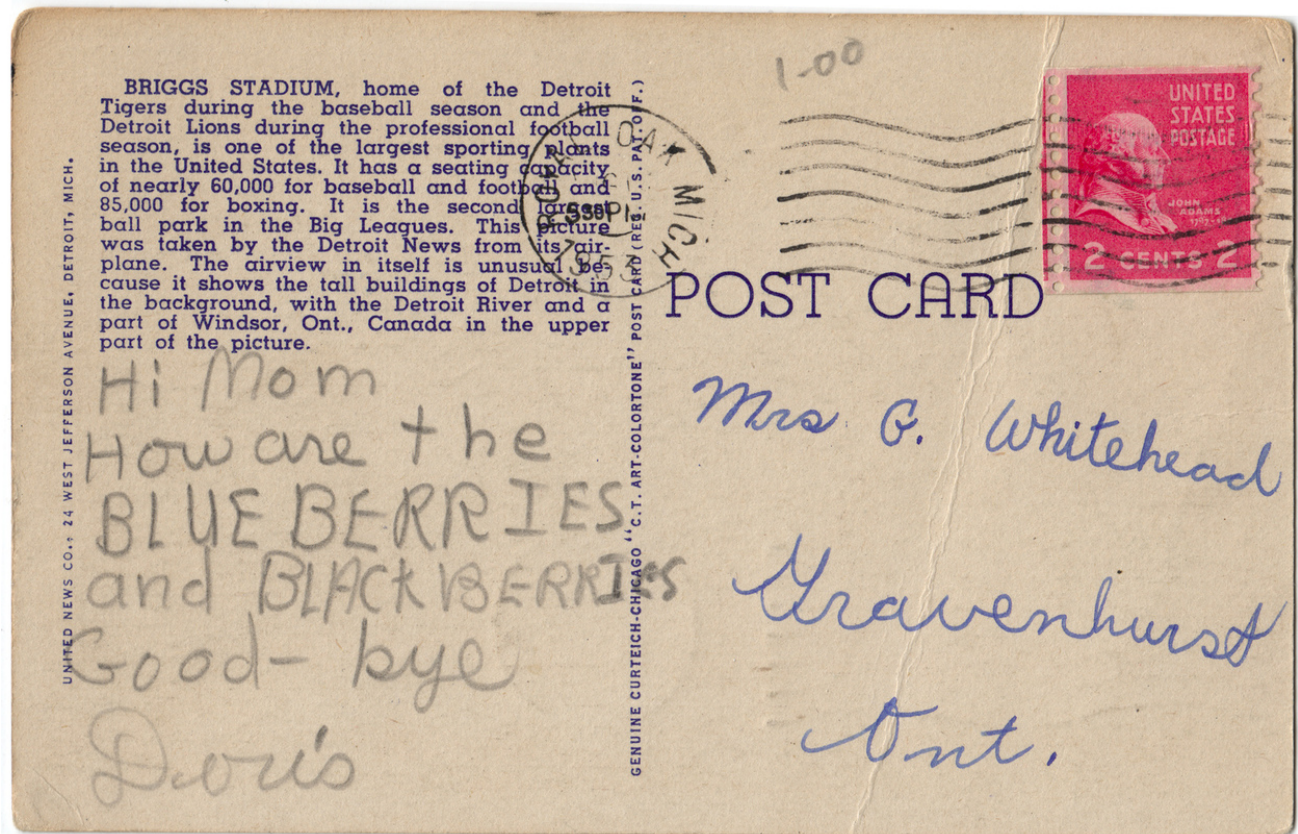
10.3 Additional Postcards

Front:

254—Air View of Briggs Stadium and Skyline of Detroit, Mich.

COPYRIGHT THE DETROIT NEWS

OB-H1295

Back:

10.4 Further Reading

- **High resolution postcard scans:** https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1b_J–PO2b8vb5ElDjifCBsIYzbk1CWK5
- **Didactic videos:** https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1A13G9TTYoYjH2MAEx1zHRXxFJ8KnX1HP

CHAPTER 11

The Convenient Typer
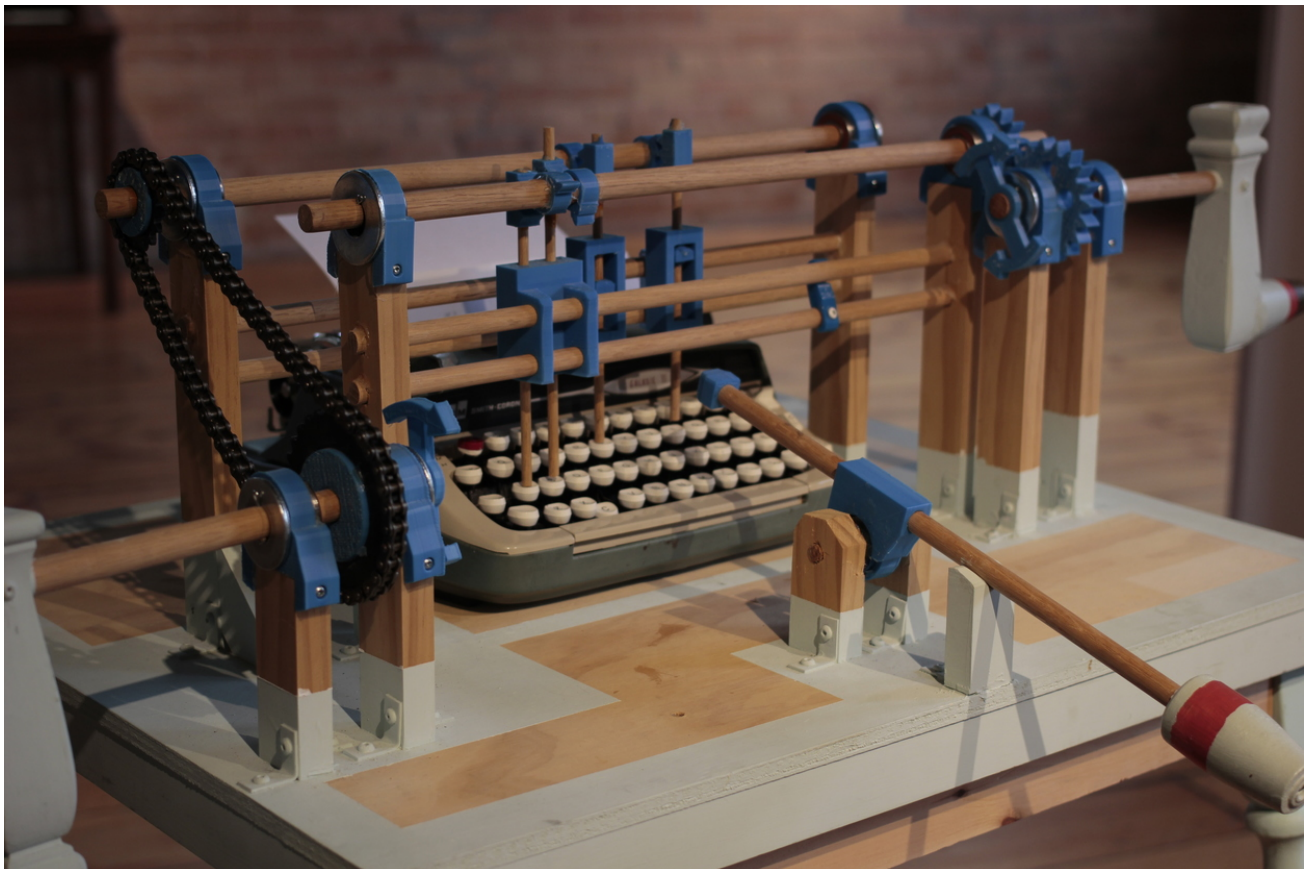
11.1 Basic Info

- **Year:** 2011-2012
- **Materials:** Typewriter, wood, 3D printed parts
- **Dimensions:** w 42", h 38", d 30"

11.2 Description

This is an apparatus designed to allow three people to conveniently type out a specific phrase: it is as it is. Each person must time their actions specifically, and operate their portion of the device with care.

This device was made to be a performance at a local art-event. Its operation is (of course) far from convenient, but it does type out the most true thing I could think of at the time.
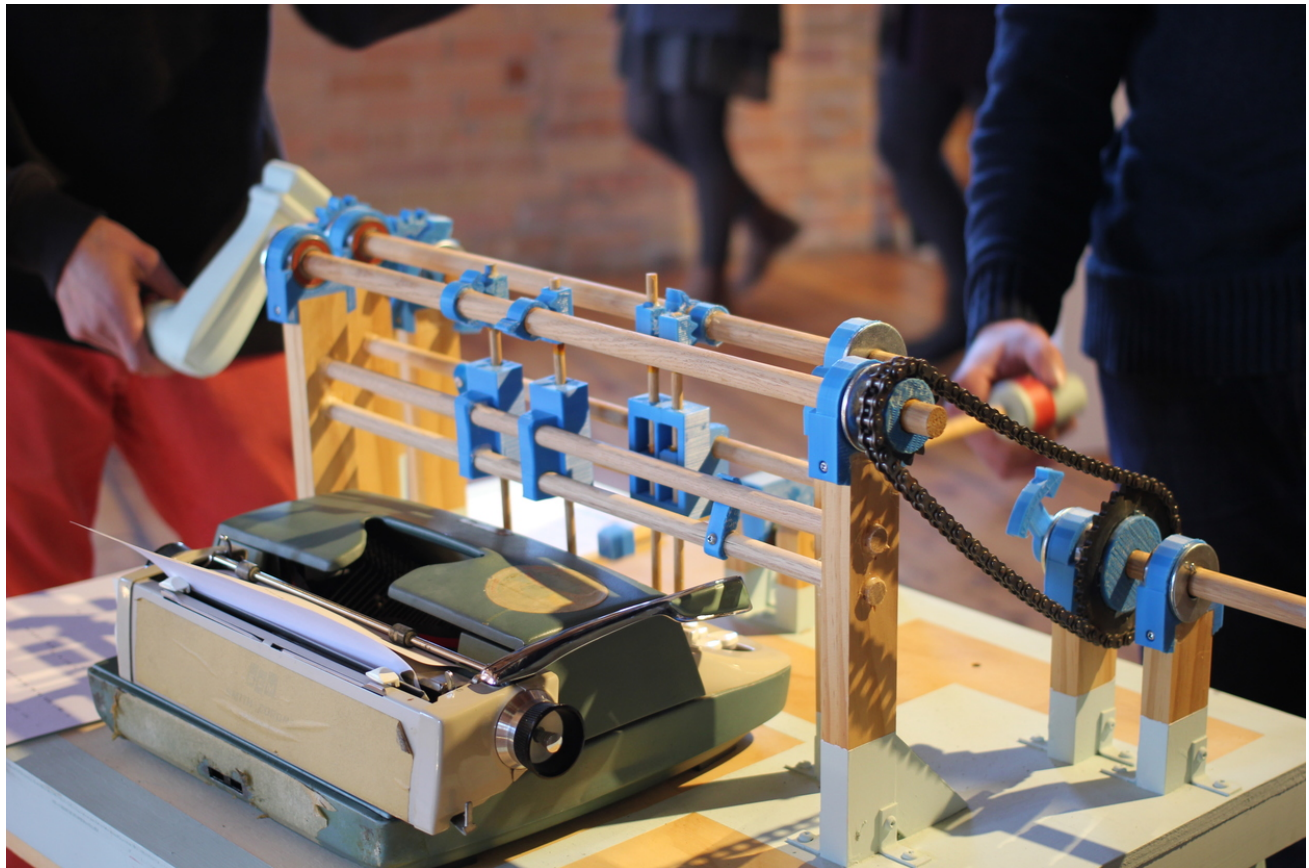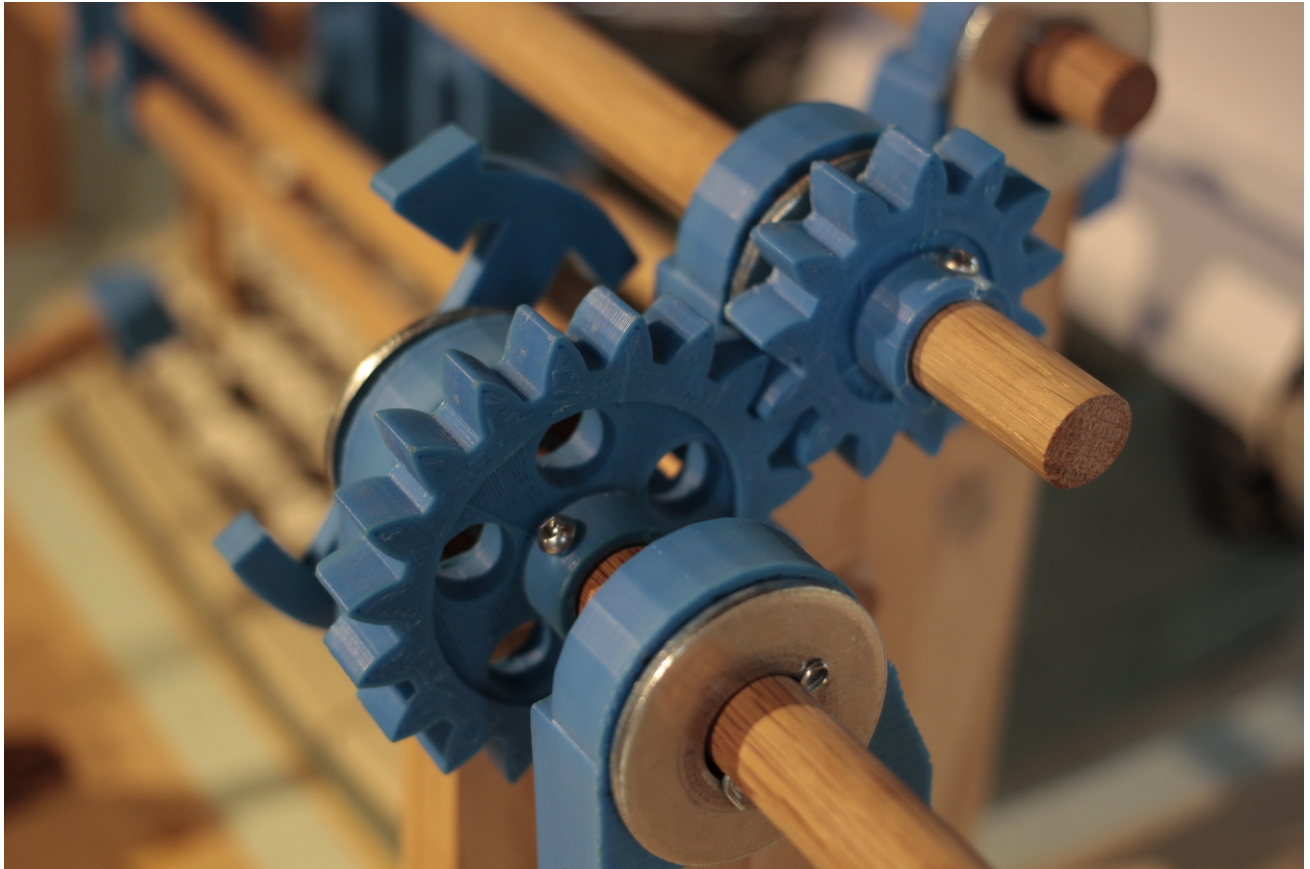

In its installation I guide the use of the machine through a comic persona who is there to force the proper and specific use of the machine. The Convenient Typer was born out of my fascination with music boxes, and is the precursor to Beep-Boopatronics.

11.2.1 Tech Specs and Maintenance

The difficulty with this device is that it was made to look interesting and inviting, but it is not a "toy" or "playable" in the way some visitors expect. Once set up, it can be used to type out its iconic phrase, but typically only with my guidance.

11.3 Additional Images

11.4 Further Reading

- **Full resolution images:** https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/19FvznejvT-RSg51gSwAqq5Mg-UemFmVk
- **Source files:** https://www.thingiverse.com/thing:16954

Space Kilim

*The game can be played online here: https://www.lexaloffle.com/bbs/?pid=48975 *

12.1 Basic Info

- **Year:** 2017
- **Materials:** pico-8 game, rug and projector for installation
- **Dimensions:** variable

12.2 Description

This game was made in collaboration with Qendrim Hoti for our duo exhibition Galaxy Champion FUN ZONE. That exhibition centered around using modified/hacked video games to insert personal migrant histories into a variety of virtual worlds. Space Kilim was a game created by Hoti and I to explore how 8-bit computer graphics often have an uncanny aesthetic similarity to the motifs found in woven rugs.
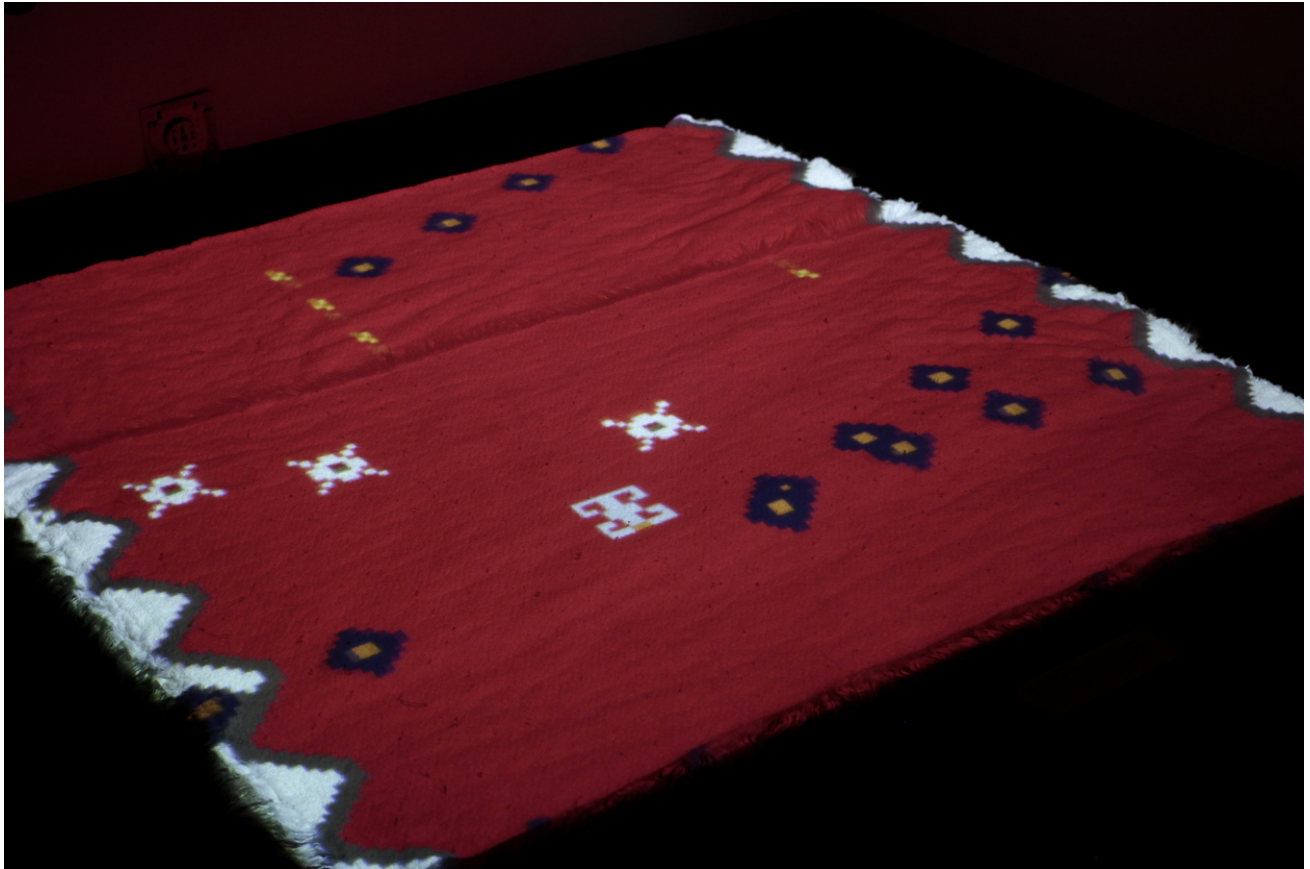
A kilim is a hand woven rug found in Morocco, Turkey, and Albania. The motifs used in the game are from a number of textiles in Qendrim's collection.
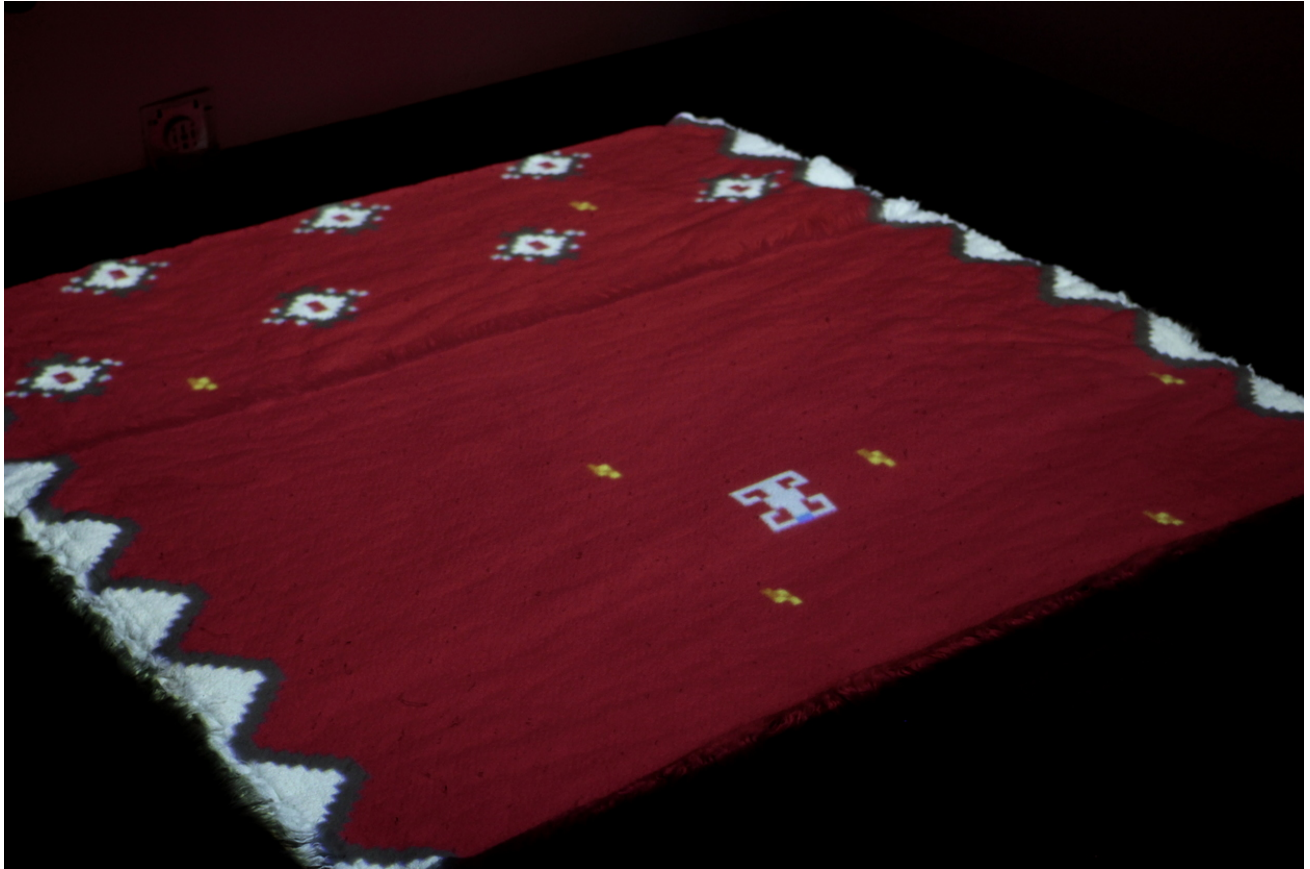
12.2.1 Technical details

The game itself can be played on any modern computer, either as a native executable or through a web-browser. In its initial installation, the game was played via a ceiling mounted projector which projected the game down onto a white fur rug. In this installation, the game stayed on continuously and a dedicated controller was provided, allowing it to be played by a gallery goer immediately.

12.3 Installation Images

12.4 Further Reading

- **Blog post:** *forthcoming*
- **Full resolution images:** https://drive.google.com/open?id=1YpvsGiPNQBql8XtTB4PqyiPdQUQyAkFM
- **Play the game:** https://www.lexaloffle.com/bbs/?pid=48975

CHAPTER 13

Super Lupo Bros.

13.1 Basic Info

- **Year:** 2017
- **Materials:** NES game cartridge, NES system, CRT television
- **Dimensions:** variable

13.2 Description

Super Lupo Bros. is a mod of the classic NES game, Super Mario Bros. The impetus for this project was to take an example from my childhood video gaming experiences and insert my childhood back into that game. To that end, I edited a rom of the original game, in order to swap the Mario sprite with one that more closely resembles me.

The modded version of the game has been loaded onto a cartridge that is playable in a real NES system. This was an important aspect of the project, as I wanted the sense of playing the game to fit into a player's memories and feelings of nostalgia. In it's most recent presentation, the installation explicitly referenced a home gaming environment, in order to help facilitate a gallery goers participation with the game.

13.2.1 Tech Specs and Maintenance

As noted above, the game is meant to run on vintage hardware using a number of specific materials, all of which I can provide. In terms of maintenance: the objects involved are standard consumer electronics which should not require excessive maintenance, and their use is reasonably straight forward. However, to extend the life of the materials, it is recommended to monitor the use of the system and TV, and turn them off if they have been unused for an extended period of time.

13.3 Additional Images

13.4 Further Reading

- **Blog post:** *forthcoming*
- **Full resolution images:** https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1LYqTH-qkv7GNssrgICoKCctAqjZfsAFH?usp=sharing

CHAPTER 14

Dante's Inferno

14.1 Basic Info

- **Year:** 2017
- **Materials:** NES game cartridge, NES system, CRT television
- **Dimensions:** variable

14.2 Description

Dante's Inferno is a mod of the classic NES game, The Legend of Zelda. This is a work in progress game mod, created to alter the story and graphics of the original game. Specifically, the simple story text in the game has been replaced to include my translation of the first passage from Dante's Inferno. The process of translation was my first (humorously misguided) attempt to try and learn Italian.

14.2.1 Tech Specs and Maintenance

Just like Super Lupo Bros., the game is meant to run on vintage hardware using a number of specific materials, all of which I can provide. In terms of maintenance: the objects involved are standard consumer electronics which should not require excessive maintenance, and their use is reasonably straight forward.

14.3 Further Reading

- **Blog post:** *forthcoming*

CHAPTER 15

Polaroids

15.1 Basic Info

- **Year:** 2012-2018

- **Materials:** Impossible Project/Polaroid Original Film

- **Dimensions:** individual images are 3.5" x 4.25"

15.2 Description

In mid 2012, I became fascinated with the Polaroid SX-70. The camera is a folding SLR, and when released in 1972, it was Polaroid's first integral film camera. My first exposure to the SX-70 was this video, in which it just seems so marvelous.

Then, there is the story of Jamie Livingston. His photo a day project brought him from 1979 to 1997, with around 6,700 photographs. So, some combination of my interest in Jamie's story, and the technology of the camera, led me to purchase my own.
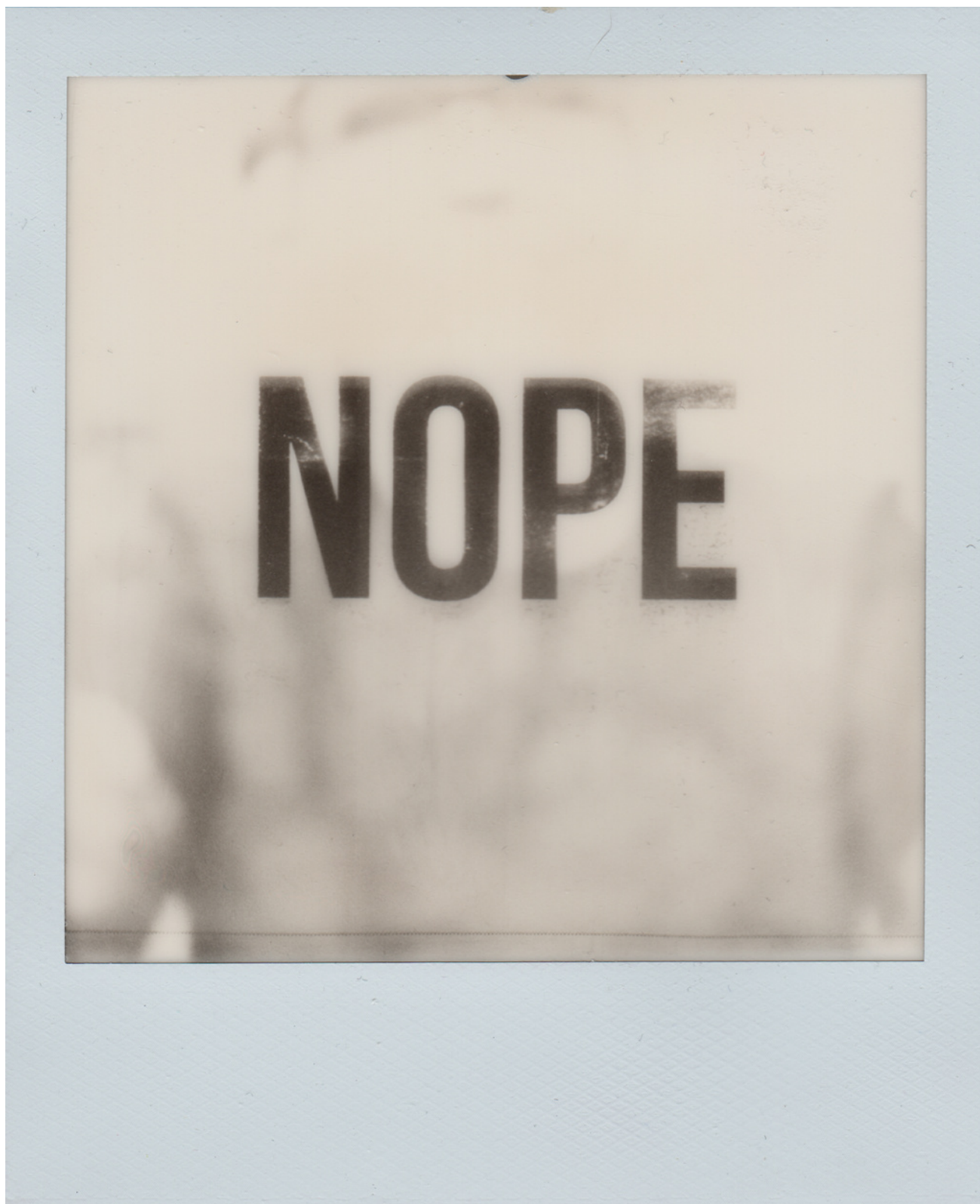
15.3 Related Projects

The polaroids often find their way into other works, or form the basis of entirely new projects.

15.3.1 Polaroid Timelapse Videos

Embedded below is an example from a set of Polaroid timelapse development videos. This project was focused on observing the film's chemical conversion, and rendering that as a digital process. The resulting videos are just slow enough to lose track of what exactly is shifting in between each individual frame. In the case of images which were over-exposed, the development process gradually gains then loses detail before developing to completion.

15.3.2 NOPE Images

In a rare experiment with negation (instead of affirmation), the NOPE images are a set of pictures that have been taken with a thin plastic slide hidden inside the camera. The plastic slide has a single word printed on it, which is imprinted onto an over-exposed image as it is being taken.
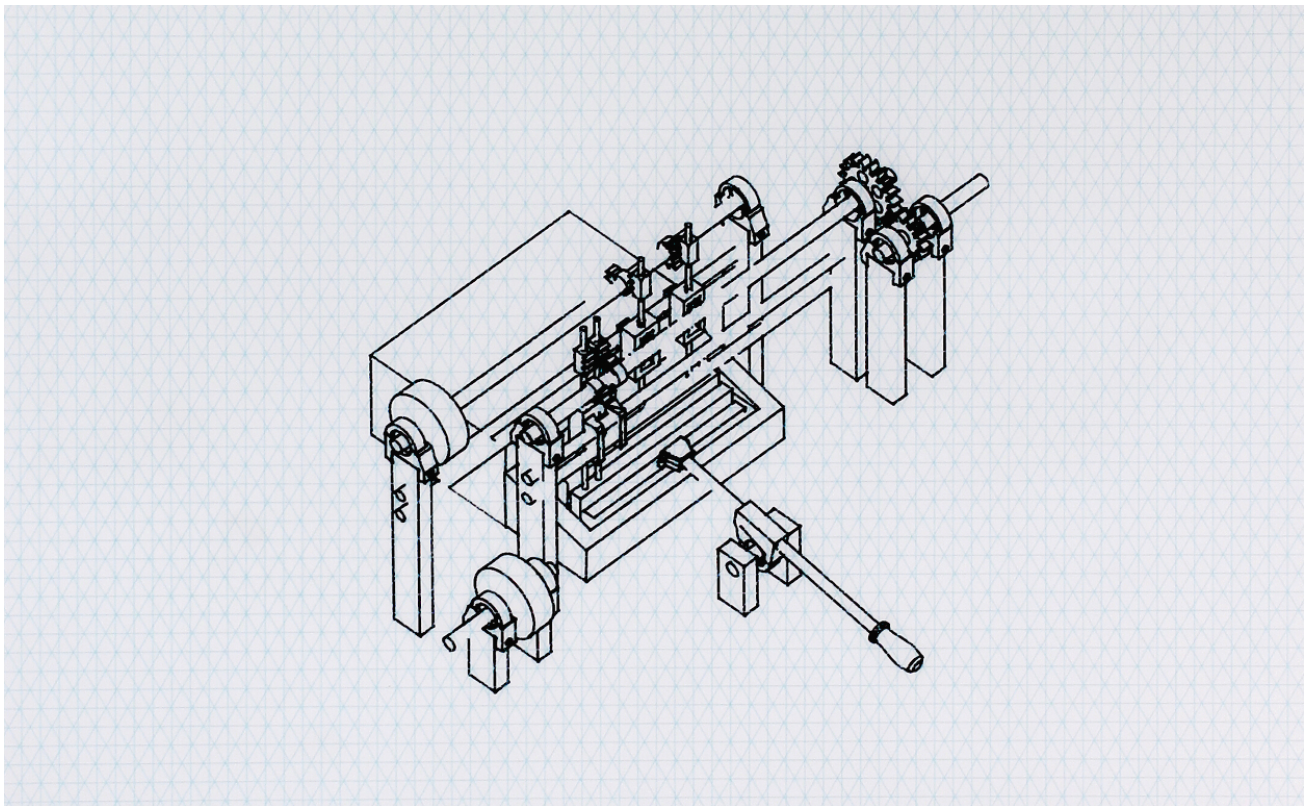
15.4 Further Reading

- **Blog posts:** My SX-70, Polaroid Timelapses

- **Sample   High   resolution   images:**   https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/ 1sD1JBpgzKbwqGrRxxyVnWVnb-WmjVYnB

Plot Lines

16.1 Basic Info

- **Year:** 2018
- **Materials:** graphic marker on isometric grid vellum

- **Dimensions:** 17.5" x 22"

16.2 Description

Related to my continued interest in porting things from one form into another, the Plot Lines project takes a digital drawing and expresses it physically. Many of my projects rely on the creation of 3D models to plan out how the completed object will work, or the models themselves are 3D printed and used to complete the object. 3D printed parts are integral to objects such as the Just Another Beep-Boop Machine, and for objects such as The Convenient Typer, and Beep-Boopatronics a complex 3D model was made to design the interaction between the 3D printed parts and the existing physical objects. The Plot Lines project was an opportunity to take these 3D models and render them as independent drawings.
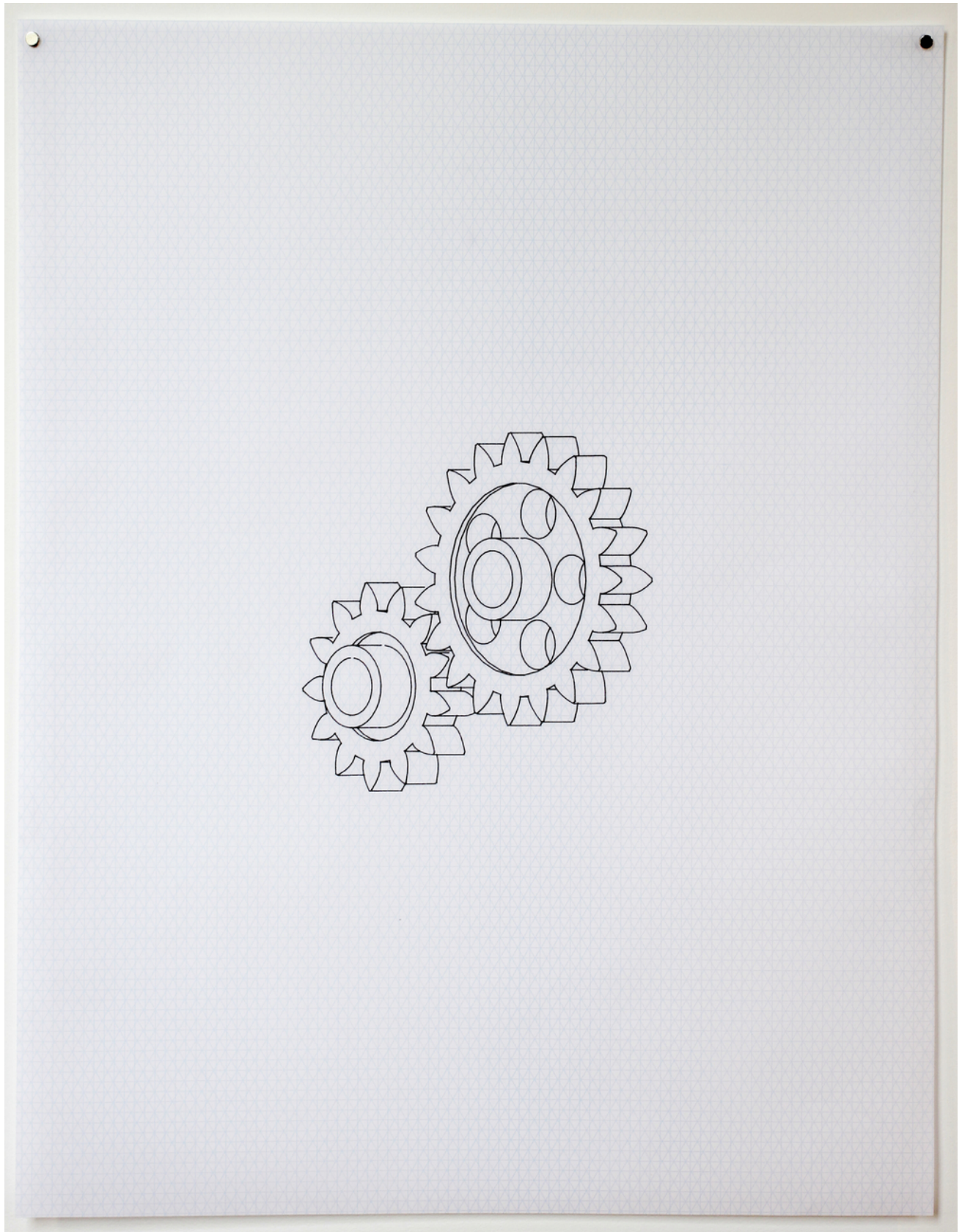
To complete this project the 3D models were rendered into vector image files, then drawn onto the vellum using a

pen plotter. In this case, the pen plotter used was actually a converted vinyl cutter whose blade was replaced with a 3D printed pen attachment. Though now obsolete, The pen plotter still has a very unique characteristic: since the lines are drawn by a marker or pen, the plotted drawing has both a digital/mechanical quality, while maintaining some resemblance to a line drawn by hand.
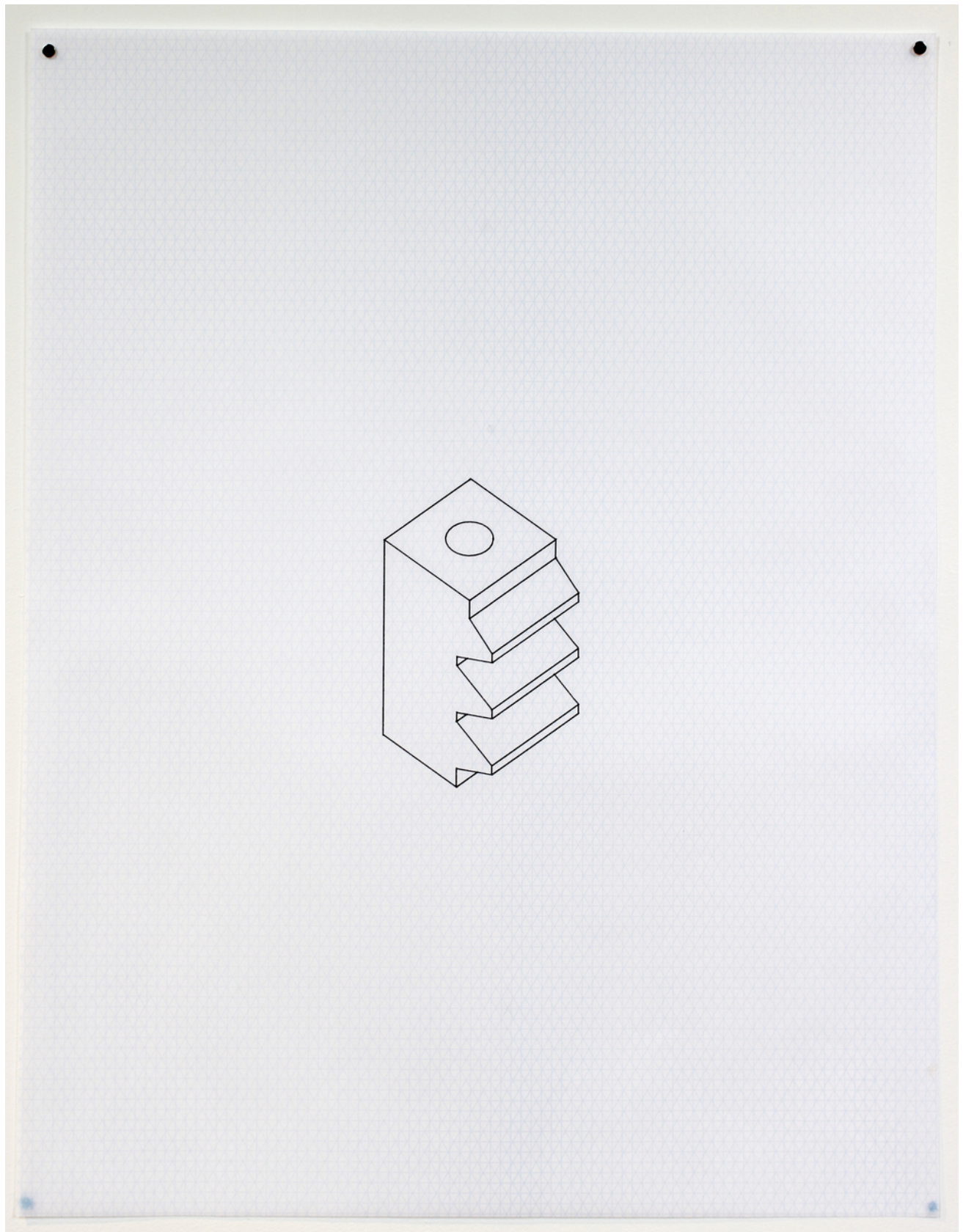
16.3 Additional Images
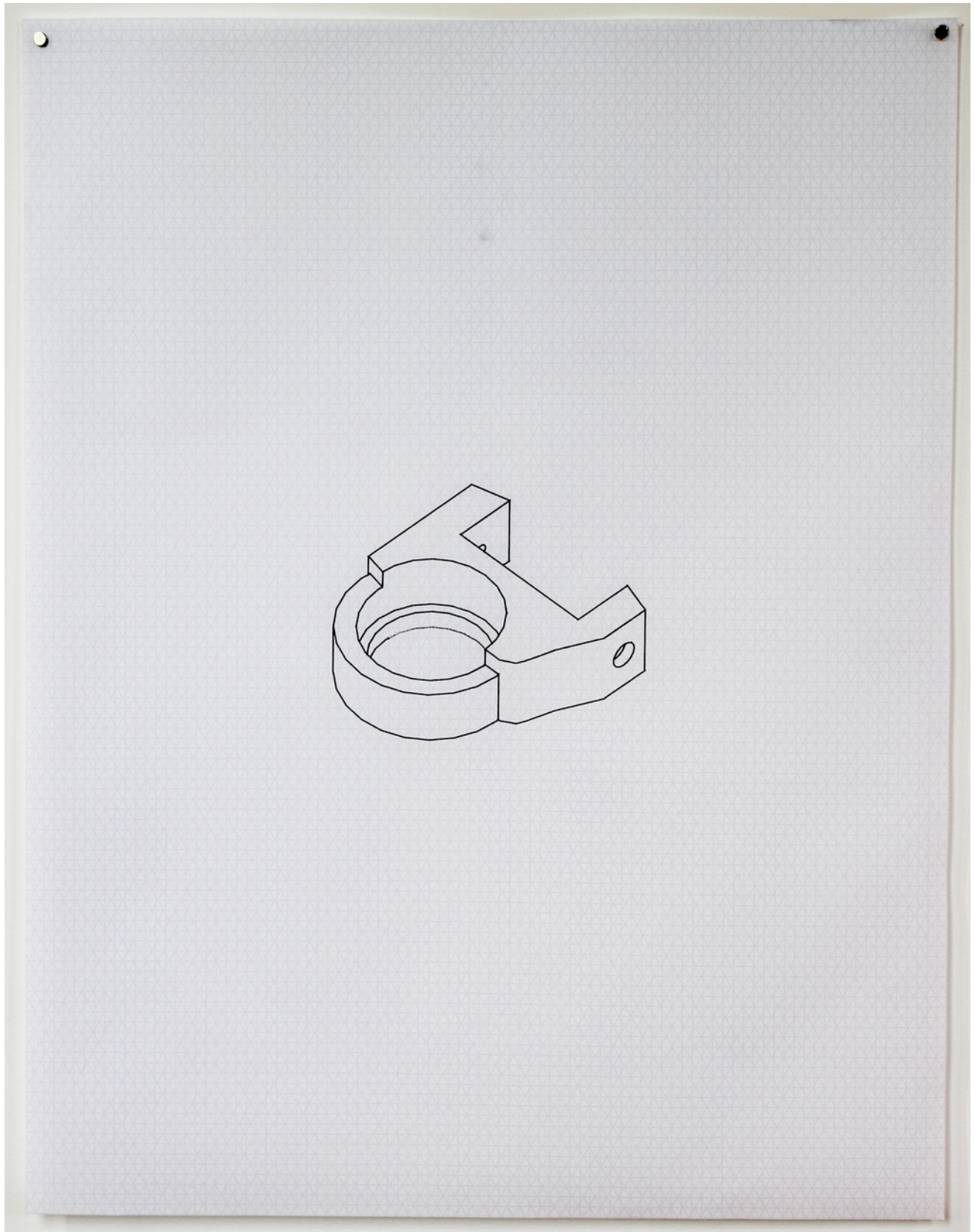
16.4 Further Reading

- **Blog post:** *forthcoming*

- **Full resolution images:** https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1SnOrqdi_c-AWglygSlCkyn6Z3IWfCIXs