

UN COUP DE DÉS  
JAMAIS N'ABOLIRA LE HASARD:  
TRANSLATIONS IN HIGHER DIMENSIONS

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## Preface

In *The Book To Come* Maurice Blanchot maintains that Stéphane Mallarmé's *Un Coup de dés* "opens up a new dimension for literature . . . through the discovery of more complex structures" (149), all of which act as poetic gateways into an environment beyond the two-dimensional space of the page. Virginia A. La Charité argues that this higher-dimensional environment, at least within Mallarmé's text, comes to exemplify "a primary field [of space] against which form, shape, colour, [and] dimensions gain delineation and definition (13)—a space that "reflects cosmic reality" (36) more than static linearity. La Charité further maintains that this continuum of space showcases "one of the three major components of *Un Coup de dés*, [with] the other two being the page itself and the type of printed words" (9). Together, these three components give shape and add meaning within Mallarmé's continuum. Within this continuum, these textual structures form constellations of signification, all of which possess the ability to transcend margins, change shape, and exist in an almost infinite realm of possibility (14). In essence, *Un Coup de dés* exemplifies a kind of dimensional transcendence.

Several artists have offered translations of Mallarmé's text, including, among others, Marcel Broodthaers (in *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard. Image*), Guido Molinari (in *Équivalence: Un coup de Dés jamais n'abolira le Hasard*), and Michalis Pichler (in *Un Coup de dés Jamais n'Abolira Le Hasard [Sculpture]*). All three artists attempt to expose the higher-dimensional characteristics of the poem through the literal erasure of the text. These artists do not realize, however, that through the abolition of the text's components, these translations

unravel the topological significance of the typography in the poem's structure. In *Dimensional Typography*, J. Abbott Miller maintains that “the histor[ians] of typography and signage have [always] interpreted letters as physical, spatial entities” (1)—entities that inhabit a realm in higher-dimensional space. Through the critical frameworks of such theorists as Charles Olson, Malcolm Bowie, and Virginia A. La Charité, Mallarmé's text exemplifies a spatial entity—one that topologically exists, much like a constellation, within a higher cosmic continuum. To aid me in this argument, I visually showcase the “dimensional potentiality” in Mallarmé's text (a potentiality that the translations by Broodthaers, Molinari, and Pichler neglect to consider). I illustrate these ideas through a trio of my own three-dimensional translations. The first of these translations employ computer-generated, multi-directional typography to help accentuate the three-dimensionality of the text. The second translation showcases the text as a set of computer-generated, stereoscopic projections—three dimensional images that elevate the text off the flat, two-dimensional page. The third translation consists of computer-generated, algorithmic extrusions—mathematical translations that render each page as a dimensional entity within its own spatial environment. Together, these translations explore other untapped veins of spatial signification in *Un Coup de dés*, while remaining faithful to the higher dimensionality suggested by the themes of the text.

What does *Un Coup de dés* signify? In his preface to the text, Mallarmé identifies the poem as a newer genre for expressing the most metaphysical conceptions of “la Poésie—unique source” (Direz)—or the unique source from which poetry originates. The poem describes the aftermath of a shipwreck—a shipwreck that signifies, on a textual level, the annihilation of syntax in which the vessel's semantic debris drifts aimlessly, chaotically, within the space of the

page. According to Robert Greer Cohn, *Un Coup de dés* represents “one of the most indecipherable pieces of writing in any literature” (3) in the history of poetry due to the abstract, higher-dimensional conceptions and semantic fragmentations that permeate the text—conceptions and fragmentations that syntactically shatter the rules associated with the art of reading. These conceptions and fragmentations include the employment of diversified type—type that helps to expose the dimension of depth; transcendent lines—lines that break the spatial mechanics of the page by elevating, or transcending the text “from the edge of one page across the intervening fold” (4) into the opposite page; and sentence fragmentations—semantic disjunctions that render each particle of text as spatial organisms. These techniques invariably create a “manifold” with a unique capacity for a number of diversified expositions. Maurice Blanchot suggests, for example, that the text exemplifies the anti-linear framework found within the analytical mind (149-150); Bonnie J. Isaac, on the other hand, suggests that the text semantically and structurally symbolizes a wave-like environment found within the science of fluid dynamics (169). According to La Charité, however, “space is indisputably the predominant element of Mallarmé’s [poem], occupying . . . 72% of the text” (83), and thus space assumes an almost “omnipotent quality” (71). Space itself signifies the crux of the text. Mallarmé’s text develops these spatial themes through two main motifs: through the author’s abolition of chance, and through the poem’s constellational structure.

According to Blanchot, the title phrase “*Un Coup de dés jamais n’abolira le hasard*,” or “A throw of the dice will never abolish chance,” reflects Mallarmé’s own paradoxical notion that an author cannot lay claim to the written word simply because a text “pre-exists its own realization” (143). Mallarmé argues that the authorial figure may physically write out the text

that comes to his or her mind, but the act of writing only merely connotes a form of textual extraction, not textual invention, since the act of writing involves the conscious elimination of all other possible lexicons that still remain hidden somewhere within the space of the page. The notion of chance entering a text through a moment of unintentional, or accidental, creation suggests an impossibility: an author does not have to abolish chance, since chance itself cannot exist in an already predetermined, already pre-existent text. In this sense, *Un Coup de dés* is a text that eliminates the genius of the authorial figure, while simultaneously establishing that the space of the page directly illustrates the continuum from which the text itself emanates.

In *Mallarmé and Circumstance: The Translation of Silence*, Roger Pearson remarks that Mallarmé's "Script is the fold of dark lace, encompassing the infinity of the universe . . ." (8). Words and sentences, at least in *Un Coup de dés*, do not "project linearly" (Blanchot, *A Book of the Book* 151), but expand and scatter across the space of the page like astronomical constellations in a space-time continuum. The word "*UNE CONSTELLATION*," found on page 11, suggests that the text exemplifies an asterism within what La Charité calls the "expanse of the universe" (13)—an expanse that, in this case, represents the page itself. Structurally, the text's layout generates ideograms that resemble astrophysical delineations found in the northern hemisphere. Cohn argues, for example, that the third page of the poem portrays the constellation Ursa Major, or the Big Dipper. This constellational representation, however, does not portray the actual image of Ursa Major as seen in the northern sky, but portrays the distorted wave-like reflection of the constellation as it might appear on a fluidic surface. This reflection signifies the wave-like motion of the text as it flows with cosmic motion through the white continuum of the page. On the last page of the text, Mallarmé revisits Ursa Major, but with one added feature—the

inclusion of Ursa Minor. The fact that the page now simultaneously holds two constellations instead of one suggests that the text resides within a kind of “Big Bang” that expands and creates more space for language. This birth and expansion invariably falls back on Mallarmé’s own notion that the page illustrates the fetal environment in which the text emerges, gains delineation, and expands into definition.

How does Mallarmé create this spatial continuum? In normative texts, a page usually signifies a lone dimensional plane segregated from the rest of the text through paginal margins and gutters. Typically, the “margin frames or encloses the printed elements” of the text, and this frame “delimits the amount of words and lines [the page] can support” (La Charité 41). When a reader flips through a text, he or she does not, by virtue of the text’s anatomy, see one unified field of space, but two page-environments segregated by left and right margins and one inner fold. To unify these two opposite pages into one continuum, Mallarmé composes a double page, or “recto-verso” layout, doing so by abolishing both the inner margins and the inner furrow. This structural crystallization allows a word or a line to transcend the space of the standard pageblock, leaping from the left, verso side of the page to the right recto side of the page without fragmentation or discontinuity: for example, the line, “EXCEPTÉ / à l’attitude / PEUT-ÊTRE / aussi loin qu’un endroit” (Cohn 11), found on the verso side, interfuses with “fusionne avec au delà” (11) on the recto side. Although the text’s inner furrow dissects this line between “endroit” (11) and “fusionne” (11), the phrase, as if spatially fused, reads as one undivided text. This fusion across the boundaries of margins and inner fold showcases the notion that all texts, not just Mallarmé’s, can experience a kind of spatial and metaphorical transcendence. According to this idea, the text, then, exists in a kind of fourth-dimensional Minkowskian vastitude, where

lexicons might limitlessly traverse through the solidified, spatial barriers of the paginal margins and furrows.

Although Mallarmé argues that “the difference in the printed characters...dictates their importance for oral expression ... [and] indicates their rise and fall in intonation” (Mallarmé 105), the text’s heterogeneous typography helps to “reaffirm the ... dimensionality of [the] space” (La Charité 60) on the page. In “Projective Verse,” Charles Olson introduces the theory of “COMPOSITION BY FIELD” (52). This theory argues that the “large area of the whole poem” (55) connotes a spatial plane where “all syllables and all the lines must be managed in their relations to each other” (52). In this spatial management, the “matter of [textual] objects” (55) (which include the images and sign-systems that they imply) forms the constellational lattice of the work itself, and this lattice helps to express the notion that “FORM IS NEVER MORE THAN AN EXTENSION OF CONTENT” (52). Although this idea illustrates the poem’s vocal and kinetic structure, the notion possesses a unique versatility that enables its critical framework to transcend the parameters of oral expression and converge upon the idea that the text’s typographical, if not the text’s topological, framework reflects the poem’s spatial context. Within this spatial framework, a number of typographical variations and topographical variations permeate the text. Some of these variations include: typeface diversification (like font sizes that range from 22 point font to 3 point font while simultaneously occupying the same spatial environment), lexical significations that exemplify space and dimensionality (like “UNE CONSTELLATION” [Cohn 11] and “DE DÉ” [1]), and ideogrammatic illustrations of astronomical delineations (like the constellations Ursa Major and Ursa Minor). Together, these variations help to create the text’s higher-dimensional context through a lattice, both

typographical and topological. This lattice suggests that the poem signifies a spatial entity found within higher-dimensional space. In *Mallarmé and the Art of Being Difficult*, Malcolm Bowie remarks that the “[p]rint [of the text] . . . gives pattern to the space which surrounds it” (116), and helps to express the idea of an infinite continuum between and beyond the particles of text.

Bowie maintains that space “is for Mallarmé no more empty than physical space is for Descartes or for Einstein” (144). For Descartes, empty space does not exist; space “is a corporeal substance . . . extended in length, breadth, and depth. This [three-dimensional substance] means that the extension constituting bodies [such as text], and the extension constituting the space in which those bodies are located [like the white space of the page] are the same” (Feinburg 148). In short, the space of the page constitutes an extension, or an amplification, of the text itself—or in other words, a parallelism exists between both text and the space the text occupies. In this respect, the “unthinkable blankness lying beyond the busy textures of the poem” (Bowie 116) is a form of “unknown language” (116), paragrammatic in nature, where “nothing remains to be perceived, or understood, or cherished, or repudiated” (116), much like the text of the poem itself. Even though astrophysicists, less than a century ago, might have believed that space constitutes an empty vacuum void of substance, Einstein is the first physicist to realize that empty space possesses physical properties. In *Nothingness: The Science of Empty Space*, physicist Hening Genz explains Einstein’s theory of relativity, in that within space “Mass . . . fluctuates, and empty space [sees] a constant emergence and disappearance of particles that carry this mass” (viii). Genz further adds that physical space “is by no means empty and devoid of characteristics . . . anything that can exist will oscillate and spin in it in a random, disordered fashion” (viii). In this respect, Bowie’s astrophysical ideas parallel Isaac’s notions that

Mallarmé's text illustrates a spatial environment where words flow like "atoms ... in a 'chaos-verseau' [chaos-outpouring], or fluctuate in a 'chaos-nuage' [chaos-cloud]" (Isaac 169)—a field of complete chaotic randomness, even though the text itself seemingly appears fixed upon the page.

For La Charité, Mallarmé's spatial continuum symbolizes, "unlimited, a-logical, anti-linear, and asymmetrical space" (13). To revisit the typographical and topological connotations of the text, La Charité explains that "space is concretized by the printed text; the flat, one-dimensional surface of the page becomes two-dimensional when it is set in relief and intensified by the blackness of the type" (39). The text has no concrete structure; it abolishes margins; it eradicates linearity. The two-dimensionality of the page unravels and transcends into a higher realm of asymmetrical dimensionality. In short, this text (according to La Charité), symbolizes a kind of non-Euclidean space—a hyperspace beyond the three-dimensional membrane of this universe. Blanchot remarks that within this non-Euclidean space, "seconds do not follow seconds in linear succession . . . [and the text] does not contain an account of something that might have occurred" (Blanchot 154). In this respect, the overall sign-system within this textual hyperspace (the "language, [the] variable type-faces and spacing, [the] pictorial imitations"[Bowie 116])—all of it can translate into an unknown, non-linear-based language from a "different temporal dimension" (Blanchot 153). This non-Euclidean-based language creates a new, higher-dimensional form of poetry that eradicates linear "narrative time" (154), or "human time" (155), and visually exposes the "omnipotent qualit[ies] of space" (La Charité 71) within the "flat unidimensional" (La Charité 41) surface of the page.



Marcel Broodthaers' *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard*. (*Image*) exemplifies a conceptual work that ferries Mallarmé's text over into a new continuum of dimensionality. In (*Image*), Broodthaers sets out to "emphasize the spatial dimensions of language while eliminating its reference" (Dworkin 150). To illustrate this dimensionality, Broodthaers extinguishes Mallarmé's text, and renders each word as a proportionate "series of solid, horizontal, black linear rectangles" (Rorimer 113) that project like shadows through the proceeding translucent pages of the text. The result, as Craig Dworkin argues, "is a geometric, constructionist design in which the calm expanse of . . . [the] page is interrupted by the hard-edged precision of fixed forms that punctuate it" (150). These geometric shadows possess a series of significations that help create the spatial framework of the text. The first of these significations set out to exemplify the characteristics that the text has in relationship to the semantic indecipherability of Mallarmé's poem. According to Dworkin, Broodthaers' text represents an "extension of Mallarmé's poetics" (Dworkin 150). This extension helps to establish the notion of what "Derrida would call 'a text, that is, a readability without a signified'" (Dworkin 150). Since the space of the page constitutes a form of non-Euclidean-based language, and since the space of the page represents an extension of the text itself, then Broodthaers text can signify yet another spatial form of paragrammatic language. The second of these significations sets out to exemplify the notion of textual transcendence. Broodthaers' black horizontal blocks "appear to float through the depths of the book" (Dworkin 151). This flotation, or perhaps exudation, suggests that a kind of textual ascension and descension occurs within the text, since the bands on the verso side appear to gradually rise with every turn of the page, and then gradually fade back into the body of the text. The fact that the bands's "edges increasingly

soften with each layer of the paper scrim” (Dworkin 151) helps to further illustrate this idea of textual transcendence. The third of these significations sets out to exemplify that these horizontal blocks, according to Anne Rorimer, represents Broodthaers’ “re-fusion of word and image within an entirely new ‘constellation’” (114) of diagrammatic text. This diagrammatic text translates the text’s structural layout into “purely visual” ideogrammatic images that remain faithful to the astrophysical delineations found within Mallarmé’s original text (such as the pictorial representations of Ursa Major and Ursa Minor), while simultaneously eliminating the original reference.

For modernist and neo-plasticist painter Guido Molinari, “Mallarmé represents the ‘starting point’ from which poetry” (Marchand 11) should venture further beyond its own “‘descriptive need’” (11) for expression and signification. According to Molinari, “poetry [is] intended to dissociate the word, in its physical component, from the meaning” (11). In *Équivalence: Un coup de Dés jamais n’abolira le Hasard*, Molinari severs the physical component of the word from its meaning through the employment of, what he calls, “phonetic colour” (11). For Molinari, colour exemplifies the “phonemic building blocks” (10) of the text. In *Équivalence*, Molinari replaces Mallarmé’s text with a series of monochromatic bands, or monochromatic phonemes, in which “colour helps to define space, or spaces” (Beaupré 11) within the field of the page. In *Équivalence*, Molinari uses only three different colours to delineate space: purple, red, and yellow. Each recto-verso page layout utilizes only two of these three colours—and while one page might showcase bands of purple text against a continuum of red, another page might portray bands of red on a yellow sea. Art historian Marie-Eve Beaupré suggests that these bands against monochromatic backdrops create a “unique pictorial

vocabulary stemming [...from] a non-figurative spatial structure organized around [the] dynamic chromatic area” (12) of the page. This use of chromatic vocabulary not only introduces a kind of “vibratory visual rhythm” (13) to the text, but helps to generate a “non-Euclidean, energetic field of infinite possibilities” (Marchand 16) through the interactions and relationships of colour. For Molinari, ““plastic reality lies in . . . the dynamic function resulting from the relationship between . . . colour and plane”” (10). In other words, the relationship and interaction between colours and the field of the page create a three-dimensional form on the two-dimensional surface. The combination of these chromatic and spatial elements creates a plastic structure, the spatial experience of which “plunges the viewer straight into the colours” (Beaupré 12) of the page through the “dynamics of active perception” (Marchand 13). This active perception helps the reader “remain in a constant state of creation” (10) that allows either him or her to “discern the optical effects activated by the [multiple] juxtaposition[s]” (Beaupré 12) of colour—optical effects that “generate an infinity of [three-dimensional] spaces” (Marchand 11) on the two-dimensional page.

Visual artist Michalis Pichler offers another conceptualized variation of Mallarmé’s poem. In *Un Coup de dés Jamais n’Abolira Le Hasard (Sculpture)*, Pichler erases the referential text so as to uncover the non-Euclidean motifs hidden within the space of the page itself. Unlike Broodthaers’ and Molinari’s texts, Pichler’s translation takes textual erasure one step further by literally removing the text in its entirety through incision. These lacerations create a series of negative spaces that act as doorways into the proceeding pages of the text. These significations illustrate the idea that, by casting streams of light onto the following pages, these gateways help to unlock notions of dimensional interconnectivity between and throughout the pages of the text.

They also illustrate a comparison between (*Sculpture*) and its referential text through a literary technique called apophaticism, the “allusion to something by denying that it will be mentioned” (Gibbons 23). By alluding back to *Un Coup de dés*, these negative-spaces essentially create another form of paragrammatic language, much like the indecipherable, non-Euclidean-based language found in Mallarmé’s text. This language sets out to illustrate that both the omitted text in (*Sculpture*) and its referents exist in a kind of anti-space—a space that consists of neither page nor text. These anti-spaces help to convey the higher-dimensional motifs and connotations of Mallarmé’s text—ideas that, at times, remain too abstract for any language to convey adequately. Although the referential text has been excised from (*Sculpture*), a kind of anti-text still very much exists nevertheless; however, this existence remains hidden somewhere within a field of higher-dimensionality, or in a kind of metaphorical Minkowskian space—a space where deeper levels of semantic signification remain buried beneath the surface of lexicons in seemingly empty space, much like hyper-spatial icebergs.

Although Broodthaers, Molinari, and Pichler visually create breathtaking translations, their renditions only explore, rather than not fully expose, the higher-dimensional motifs of Mallarmé’s text. Even though each artist uses a different technique to exhibit spatial themes, the one common approach they all share lies solely in the elimination of the referential text. According to Dworkin, “Mallarmé’s work [is] predicated . . . on the materiality of the word” (150). By abolishing the text’s literal components, Broodthaers, Molinari, and Pichler do not realize that their translations lineate any addition layer of dimensional signification. These lineations occur in three ways. First, by abolishing the text, any metaphorical kernel of meaning that the typography might connote in relation to the text’s theoretical context vanishes. Second,

by abolishing the text, the typography's own spatial characteristics invariably deflate and flattens into linearity. Third, by abolishing the text, the volumetric properties of the page itself loses its Cartesian geometric dynamics, and renders each page as flat, two-dimensional planes of textual significance.

J. Abbott Miller remarks that “letterforms are agents in an increasingly complex layering of information” (1)—a layering that helps assist in the development of spatiality. In Broodthaers’ translation, for example, the removal and replacement of the text with horizontal bands neutralizes an important layer of historical significance that the typeface plays within Mallarmé’s text. In *The Alphabetic Labyrinth: The Letters in History and Imagination*, Joanna Drucker remarks that the modern Didot typeface, the typeface employed by Mallarmé in *Un Coup de dés*, exemplifies a “departure from earlier roman faces . . . and [is] a type developed through the course of 18th century [France]” (202). Temporally, this 18th century development makes Didot a textual design from the Age of Enlightenment—a period in history that not only marks scientific exploration and advancement, but portrays a time of philosophical flirtation with higher-dimensional concepts of space. The type’s notable origin structurally places Mallarmé’s text in a direct temporal relationship with the philosophical notions that accompany this time period, such as Sir Isaac Newton’s theory that space connotes a ““substantial entity”” (Winterborne 70) that possesses form. This Newtonian view of space ultimately alludes back to Bowie’s Cartesian notion that the space found within Mallarmé’s text exists as a corporeal substance—a substance that possesses length, width, and depth, and exemplifies a physical extension of the text itself. By removing this typographical layer of information, Broodthaers loses these spatial connections suggested through the type’s historical significance.

In *Équivalence*, Molinari's removal and replacement of the text with monochromatic bands of colour inadvertently deflates the typography's spatial properties. Although Molinari employs colour to help generate a kind of paragrammatic language possessing a "non-Euclidean, energetic" (Marchand 16) structure that plunges the viewer into a dichromatic field of plasticity, the typography's spatial and temporal properties lineate through this process of colour transmogrification. Miller notes that the "SCULPTURAL AND THREE-DIMENSIONAL FORMS" (2) of modern typography derive from older typefaces created by "historical figures like [François] Ambrose Didot" (8), the father of the Didot typeface. In this respect, the Didot typeface exemplifies a kind of first-generational form of three-dimensional typography. Like the typography found in graphic design, Didot, too, possesses an array of spatial characteristics, such as directional curvature, extrusion, and tubing. The only difference between these temporal and seemingly contradistinctive typeface designs lies solely in the limitations caused by technological accessibility. By replacing the original typeface with monochromatic bands, these spatial characteristics essentially flatten the already rich spatial characteristics of the Didot typeface—and thus another layer of dimensionality becomes lost, this time through the process of monochromatic transmogrification.

Although Pichler's incisions act a kind of doorway for textual transcendence, anti-space, and as a non-Euclidean-based language that apophatically expresses notions of higher-dimensionality, the elimination of the typography altogether invariably abolishes the poem's volumetric properties of the space within the page. According to Miller, typography adds "near-to-far SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL dynamic[s]" (1) that help to accentuate the notion that the continuum of the page exists in an almost Cartesian, geometric field—a field that contains

length, width, and depth. La Charité's upholds this idea that the space of the page constitutes a kind of a geometric field when she notes that the "dramatic appearance of the printed line [in Mallarmé's text] reaffirms the three-dimensionality" (60) of the page. By abolishing the text through incision, Pichler only creates physical depth within the text as a whole rather than showcasing the Cartesian characteristics of each individual page through the dimensional dynamics of the typography—typography that holds the spatial gravity of the poem itself. By avoiding the volumetric significance of each individual page, Pichler only manages to partially uncover and exhibit the rich, higher-dimensional properties and aesthetics of *Un Coup de dés* in its spatial totality.

# P O É M E

*UN COUP DE DÉS JAMAIS N'ABOLIRA LE HASARD*

par

STÉPHANE MALLARMÉ



# PRÉFACE

**J'**AIMERAI qu'on ne lût pas cette Note ou que parcourue, même on l'oublîât : elle apprend, au Lecteur habile, peu de chose situé outre sa pénétration : mais, peut troubler l'ingénu devant appliquer un regard aux premiers mots du Poème pour que de suivants, disposés comme ils sont, l'amènent aux derriers, le tout sans nouveauté qu'un espacement de la lecture. Les "blancs", en effet, assument l'importance, frappent d'abord; la versification en exigea, comme silence alentour, ordinairement, au point qu'un morceau, lyrique ou de peu de pieds, occupe, au milieu, le tiers environ du feuillet; je ne transgresse cette mesure, seulement la disperse. Le papier intervient chaque fois qu'une image, d'elle-même, cesse ou rentre acceptant la succession d'autres et, comme il ne s'agit pas, ainsi que toujours, de traits sonores réguliers ou vers - plutôt, de subdivisions prismatiques de l'idée, l'instant de paraître et que dure leur concours, dans quelque mise en scène spirituelle exacte, c'est à des places variables, près ou loin du fil conducteur latent, en raison de la vraisemblance, que s'impose le texte. L'avantage, si j'ai droit à le dire, littéraire, de cette distance copiée qui mentalement sépare des groupes de mots ou les mots entre eux, semble d'accélérer tantôt et de ralentir le mouvement, le scandant, l'intimant même selon une vision simultanée de la Page: celle-ci prise pour unité comme l'est autre part le Vers ou ligne parfaite. La fiction affleurerait et se dissiperait, vite, d'après la mobilité de l'écrit, autour des arrêts fragmentaires d'une phrase capitale dès le titre introduite et continuée. Tout se passe, par raccourci, en hypothèse; on évite le récit. Ajouter que de cet emploi à nu de la pensée avec retraits, prolongements, fuites, ou son dessin même, résulte, pour qui veut lire à haute voix, une partition. La différence des caractères d'imprimerie entre le motif prépondérant, un secondaire et d'adjacents, dicte son importance à l'émission

orale et la portée, moyenne, en haut, en bas de page, notera que monte ou descend l'intonation. Seules certaines directions très hardies \*, des empiètements, etc., formant le contre-point de cette prosodie, demeurent dans une œuvre, qui manque de précédents, à l'état élémentaire: non que j'estime l'opportunité d'essais timides; mais il ne m'appartient pas, hormis une pagination spéciale ou de volume à moi, dans un Périodique, même valeureux, gracieux et invitant qu'il se montre aux belles libertés, d'agir par trop contrairement à l'usage. J'aurai, toutefois, indiqué du Poème ci-joint, mieux que l'esquisse, un "état" qui ne rompe pas de tous points avec la tradition; poussé sa présentation en maint sens aussi avant qu'elle n'offusque personne: suffisamment, pour ouvrir des yeux. Aujourd'hui ou sans présumer de l'avenir qui sortira d'ici, rien ou presque un art, reconnaissons aisément que la tentative participe, avec imprévu, de poursuites particulières et chères à notre temps, le vers libre et le poème en prose. Leur réunion s'accomplit sous une influence, je sais, étrangère, celle de la Musique entendue au concert; on en retrouve plusieurs moyens n'ayant semblé appartenir aux Lettres, je les reprends. Le genre, que c'en devienne un comme la symphonie, peu à peu, à côté du chant personnel, laisse intact l'antique vers, auquel je garde un culte et attribue l'empire de la passion et des rêveries; tandis que ce serait le cas de traiter, de préférence (ainsi qu'il suit) tels sujets d'imagination pure et complexe ou intellect: que ne rest aucune raison d'exclure de la Poésie - unique source.

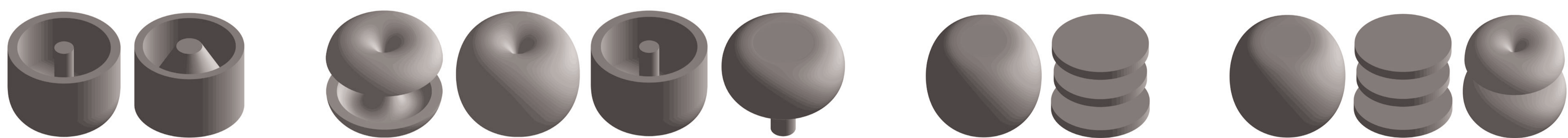
\* La parité comprise entre les mots "Seules certaines directions..." et "... suffisamment pour ouvrir des yeux" concernait plus spécialement l'édition de ce Poème donnée dans la revue *Cosmopolis* (mai 1897) pour laquelle cette Préface avait été faite. Celle-ci, du reste, nous a paru d'un intérêt assez général, et assez significative de la pensée de l'auteur pour être reproduite ici, en tête de l'édition définitive, préparée par ses soins, telle qu'elle allait paraître au moment où la mort le surprit. L'innovation principale établie par lui dans ce dernier "état" de son œuvre, pour reprendre le terme dont il se servit, nous semble consister en ceci qu'il n'existe pas de page recto ou verso, mais que la lecture se fait sur les deux pages à la fois, en tenant compte simplement de la descente ordinaire des lignes.

(NOTE DE L'ÉDITEUR).

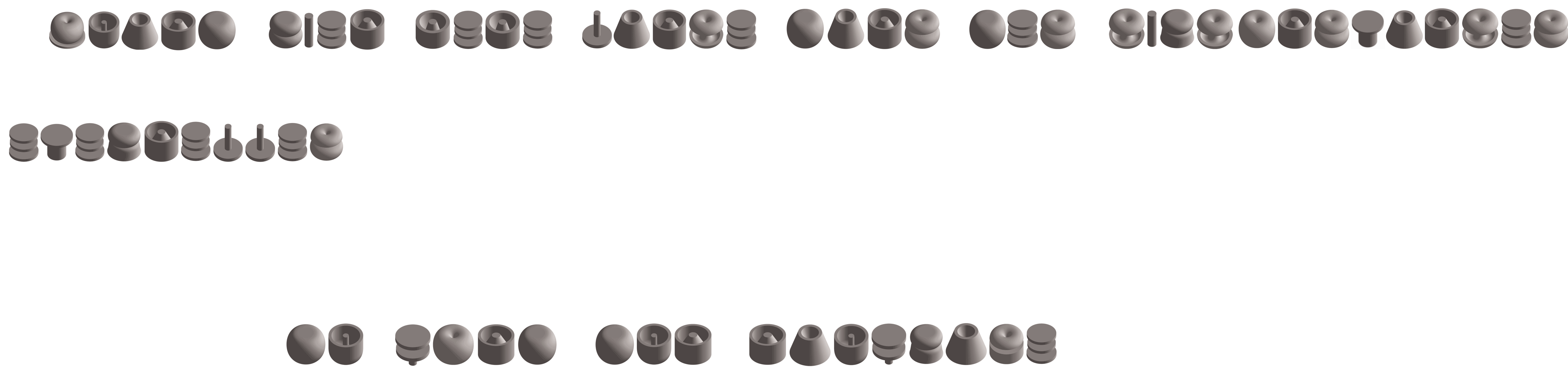
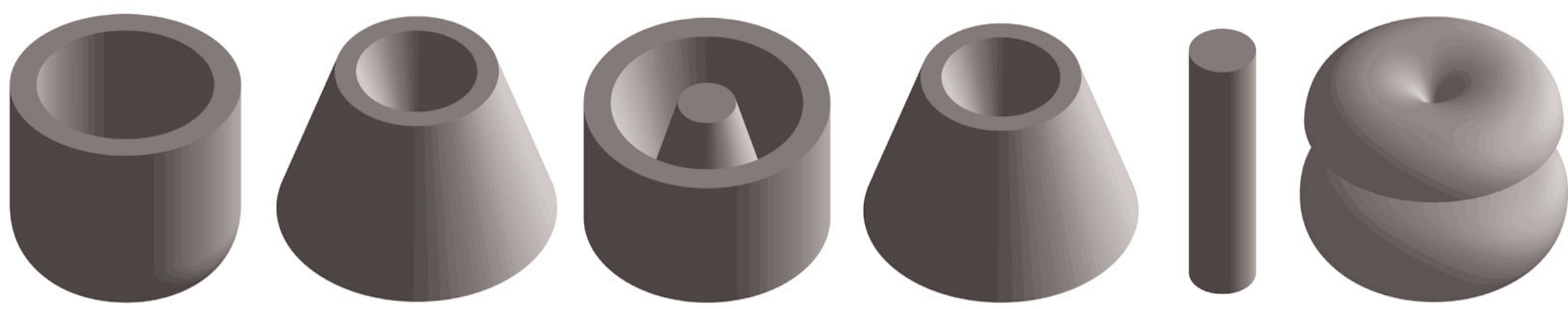
# UNIVERS REVOLVED

According to artist and graphic illustrator Ji Lee, “The ever-growing mass of written material we are exposed to every day yokes our brains to the unvarying linearity of the reading process. As a result, we tend to apply the same linear . . . tool we use to communicate to limit our perceptions as well as our possibilities for expression” (1). To combat these typographical limitations and intellectual limitations, Lee developed *Univers Revolved* — a typeface that helps to move readers “beyond the conventional linear way of reading and develop more creative strategies to decipher the meaning of each page” (1). With *Univers Revolved* typeface, Lee applied “a simple geometric formula to the capital letters of the widely used Univers typeface” (1), and then, with the assistance of a three-dimensional computer program, “revolve[d] each of these letters 360 degrees around a vertical axis drawn at its left-most point” (1). The end result creates a three-dimensional, multi-direction kernel of signification that a reader can decipher from any possible angle. To emphasize the spatial dimensions of language, Broodthaers eliminates Mallarmé’s text and replaces each line with black rectangular bands. Lee’s replacing each letter of text with his symmetrical typography allows for the spatial properties of language, and the spatial properties of the page, to be exposed without having to eliminate the type altogether. Through a simple process of transliteration, each letter morphs into a true geometric entity that possess length, width, and depth—a spatial entity that floats within the expanse of the page much like how an astrophysical body floats within the continuum of space. Lee’s typography showcases a true coalescence between word and image. This coalescence helps to illustrate the constellational validity—the cosmic actuality—in Mallarmé’s diagrammatic text, while simultaneously illustrating that the text possesses dimensional dynamics.

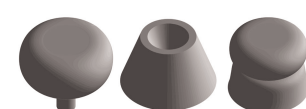
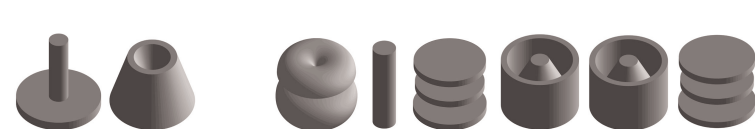
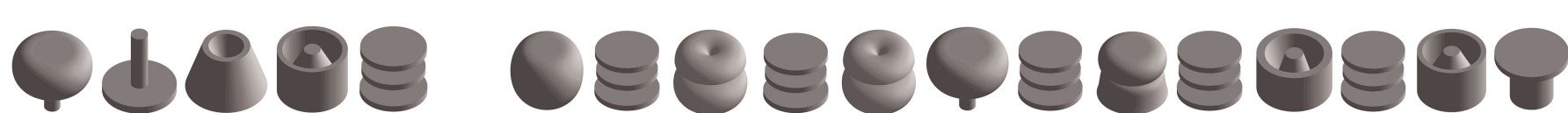
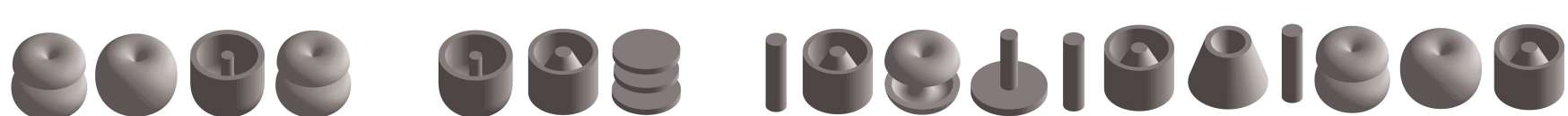
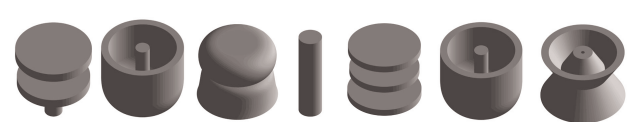
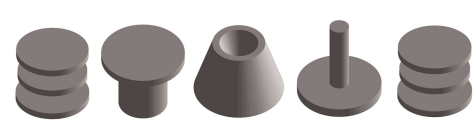
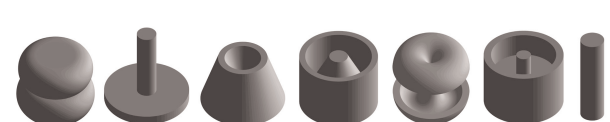
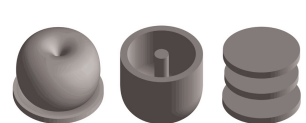
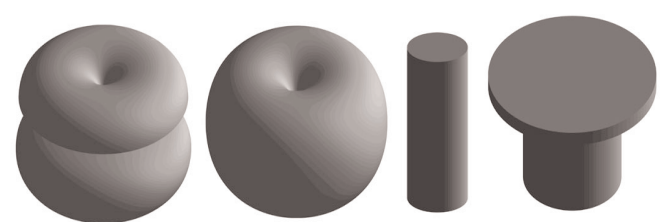












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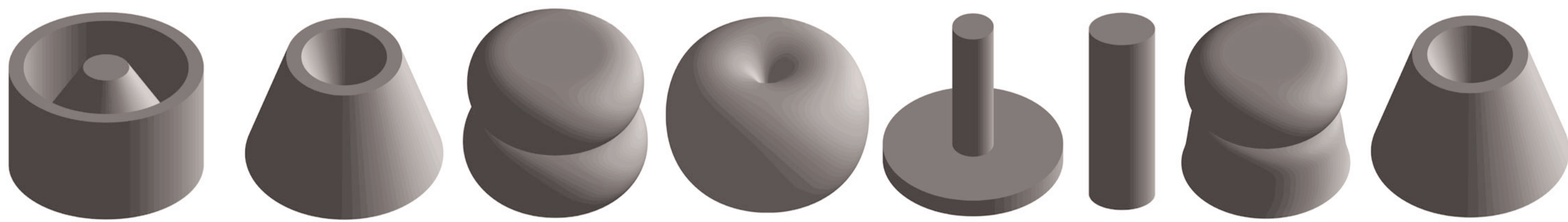
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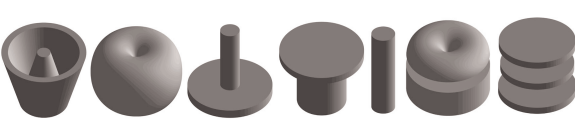
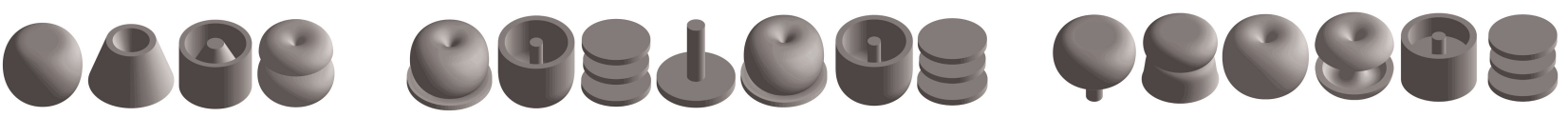
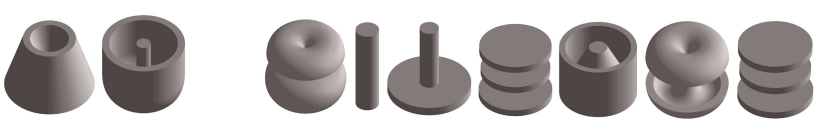
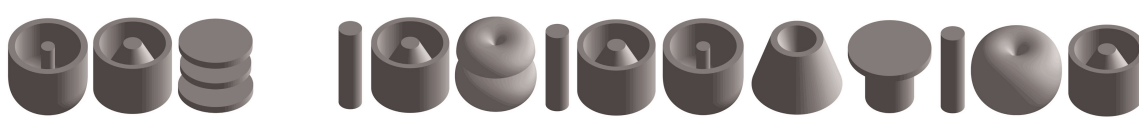
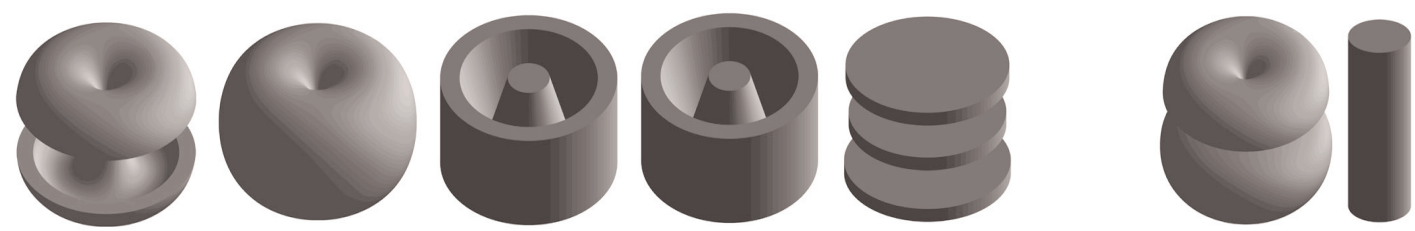
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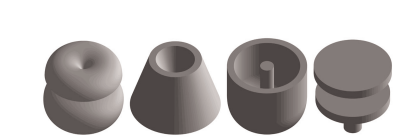
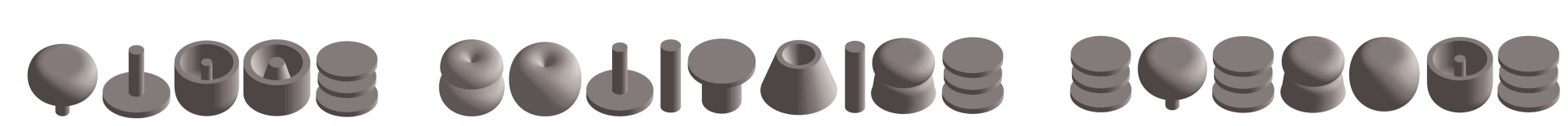












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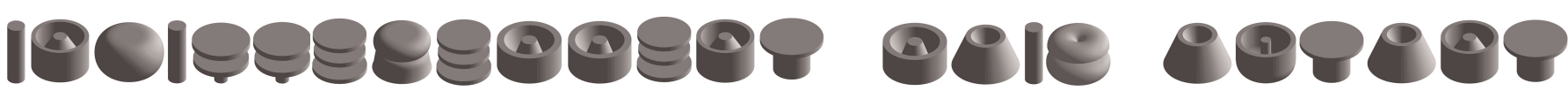
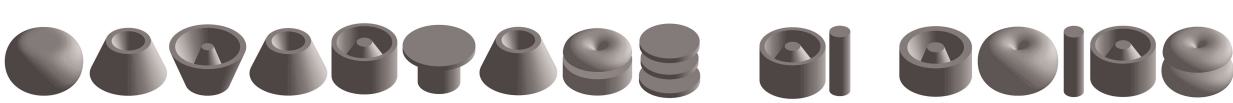
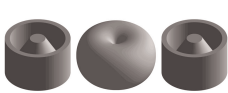
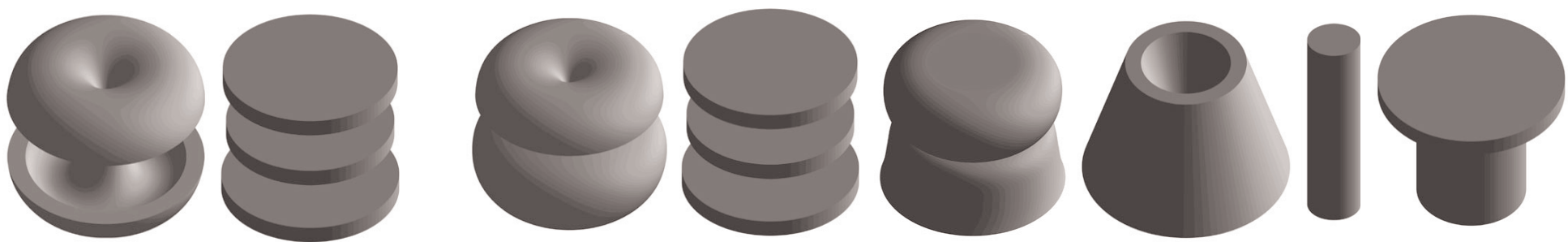
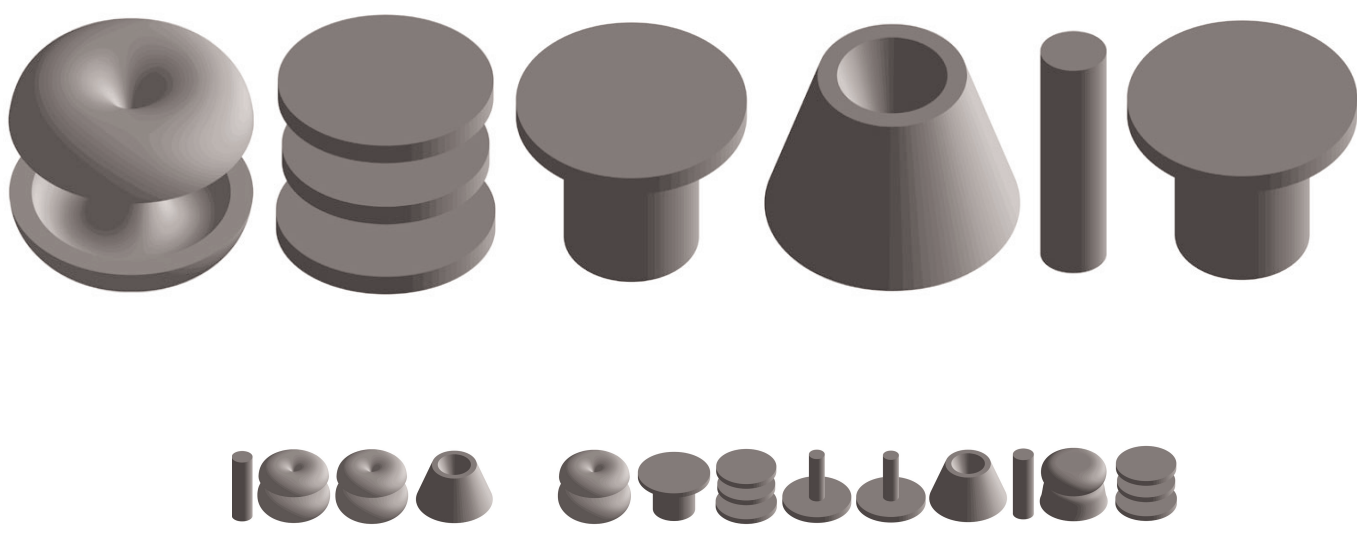
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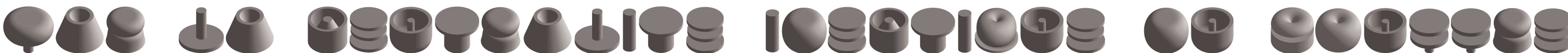
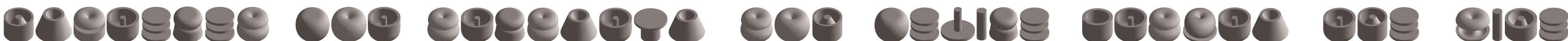
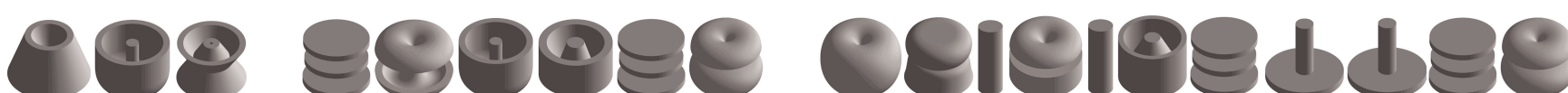
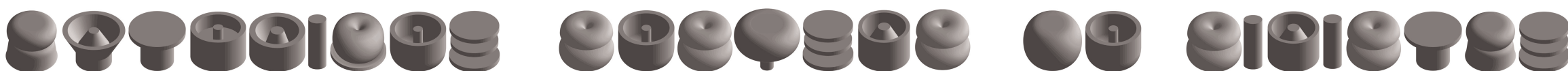
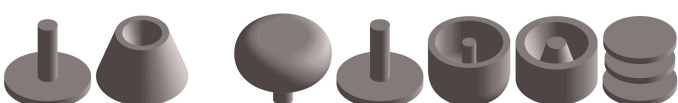
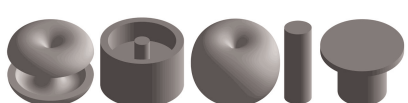
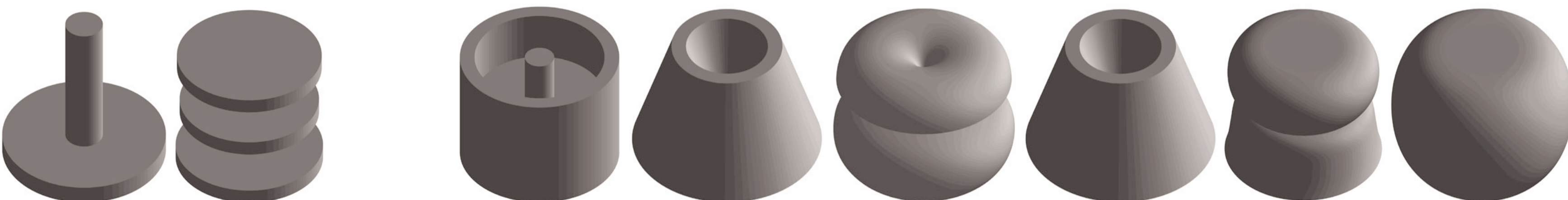
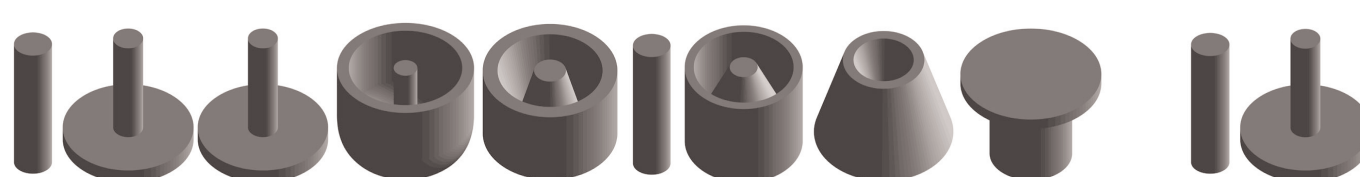
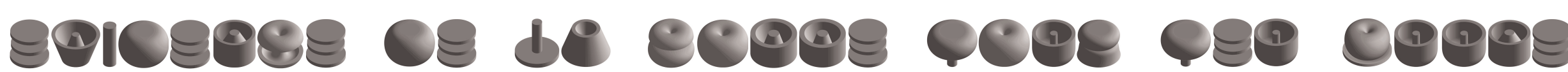
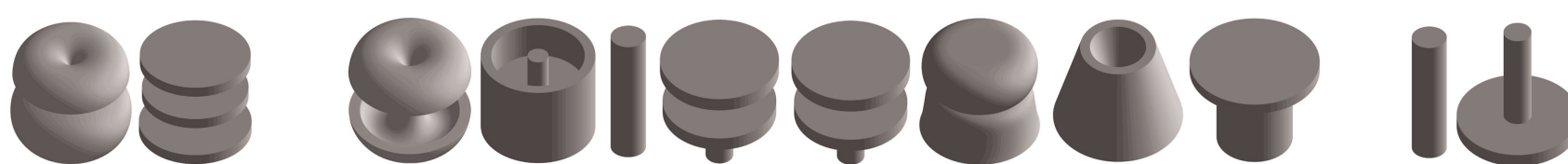
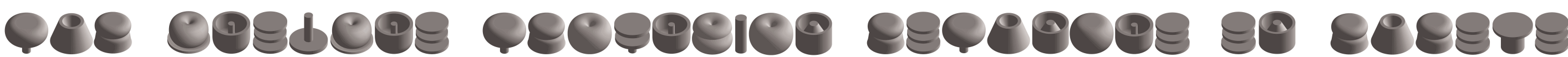
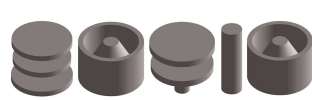
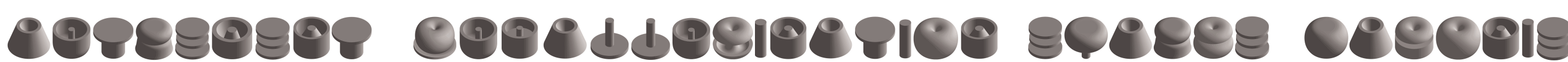
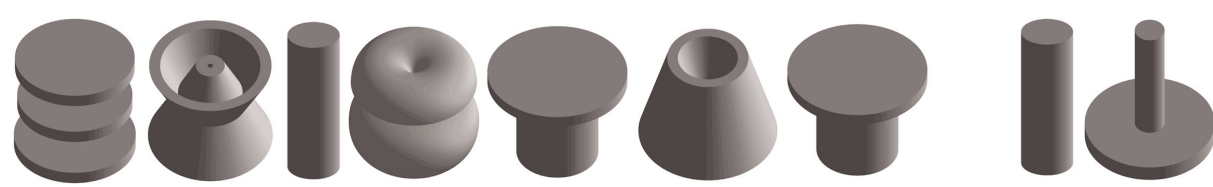
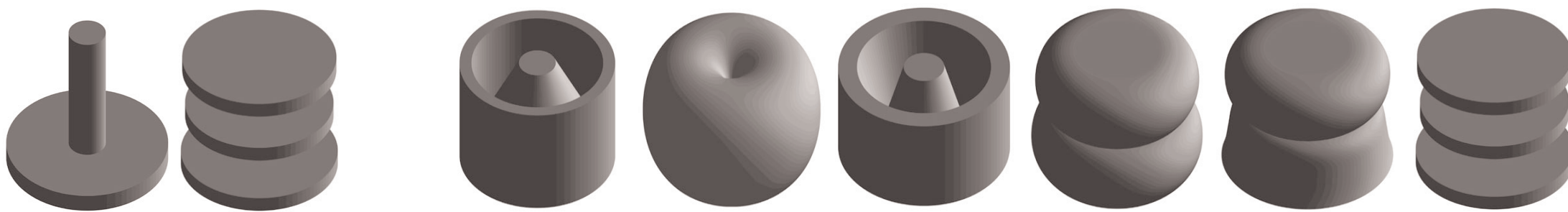
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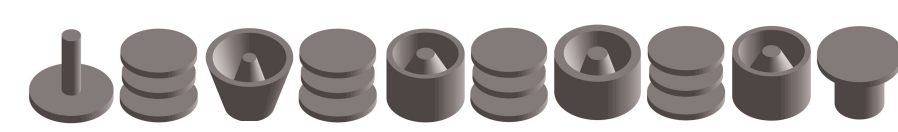
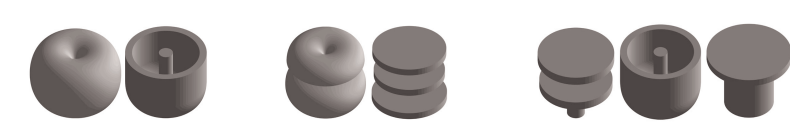
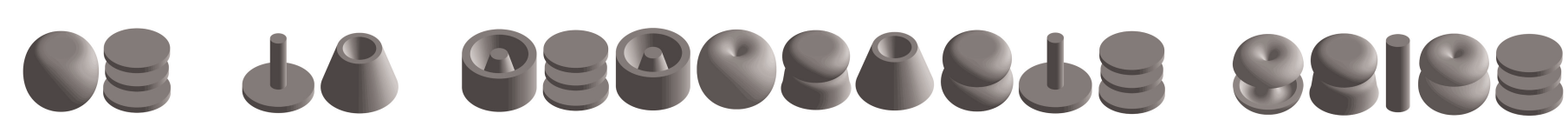
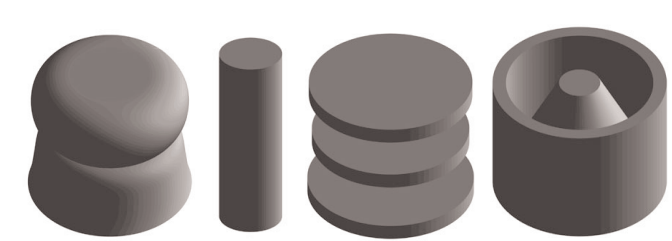
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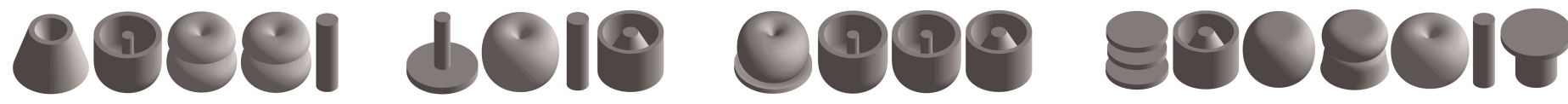
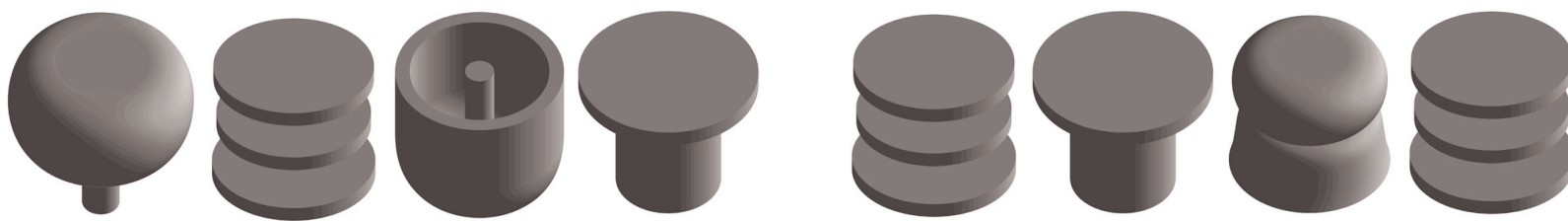
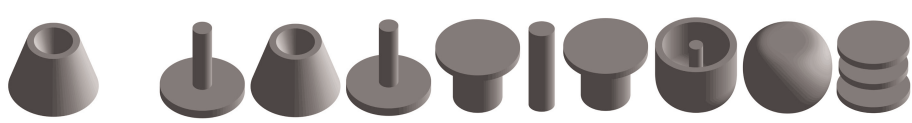
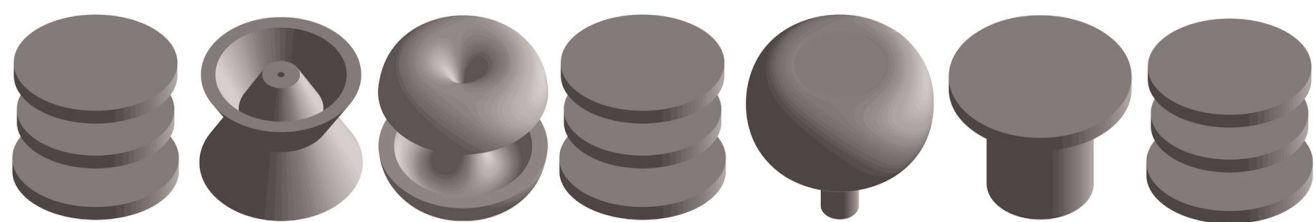














# STEREOSCOPIC PROJECTIONS

Much like how Molinari utilizes the relationships between colours to initiate a field of infinite space on a two-dimensional surface, computer-generated anaglyphic images, or monochromatic stereograms, generate a field of dimensionality through the interactions between colours. Unlike Molinari, however, who employs purple, red, and yellow to generate spatiality, anaglyphic images employ only two channels of colour: red and cyan. These images rely on three different elements to induce the illusion of depth: stereoptic superimposition, angular displacement (called parallax), and optical filters. To generate a three-dimensional image, I initially created two identical images, one image in the red channel and the other image in the blue channel. I then superimposed these images and horizontally skewed one of these images either to the right or to the left—the greater the angular displacement, the greater the image will either extrude off the page, or sink deeper into the space of the page. To experience this anaglyphic effect to its fullest potential, the viewer must wear special filters that optically translate these dichromatic images into one cogent monochromatic entity. The end result is a true plastic structure resulting from the relationships and interactions between colour and textual plane, which produces a dynamic spatial experience that not only plunges the reader directly into the page, but literally showcases the notion of textual transcendence in real time, as every letter and every word ascends from the two-dimensional surface of the page into space itself. This ascension illustrates Mallarmé's text as a true spatial entity—one that exists within a kind of liminal continuum that simultaneously resides both on the two-dimensional surface of the page, and off the paginal surface in three-dimensional space.



UN COUP DE DÉS



JAMAIS

QUAND BIEN MÊME LANCÉ DANS DES CIRCONSTANCES

ÉTERNELLESE

DU FOND D'UN NAUFRAGE



SOIT

que

l'Abîme

blanchi

étale

furieux

sous une inclinaison

plane désespérément

d'aile

lassienne

par

avance et tombée d'un mal à dresser le vol  
et couvrant les jaillissements  
coupant au ras les bonds

très à l'intérieur résume

l'ombre enfouie dans la profondeur par cette voile alternative

jusqu'à adapter  
à l'envergure

sa béante profondeur en tant que la coque

d'un bâtiment

penché de l'un ou l'autre bord

# LE MAÎTRE

surgi  
inférant

de cette conflagration

que se

comme on menace

l'unique Nombre qui ne peut pas

hésite

cadavre par le bras

plutôt

que de jouer

en maniaque chenu

la partie

au nom des flôts

un

nauffrage cela

hors d'anciens caculs  
où la manoeuvre avec l'âge oubliée

jadis il empoignait la barre

à ses pieds  
de l'horizon unanime

prépare  
s'agite et mêle  
au poing qui l'étreindrait  
un destin et les vents

être un autre

Espirt  
pour le jeter  
dans la tempête  
en repleyer la division et passer fier

écarté du secret qu'il détient

envahit le chef  
coule en barbes soumisee

direct de l'homme

ssans mef  
n'importe  
où vaine

ancestralement à n'ouvrir pas la main

crispée

par delà l'inutile tête

legs de la disparition

à quel point

ambigu

l'ultérieur démon immémorial

ayant

de contrées nulles

induit

le vieillard vers cette conjonction suprême avec la probabilité

ce lui

son ombre puérile

caressée et polie et rendue et lavée

assouplie par la vague et soustraite

aux durs os perdus entre des aîs

né

d'un ébat

la mer par l'aïeul tentant ou contre l'aïeul la mer

une chance coïseuse

Fiançailles

dont

le voile d'illusion rejailit au hantisee

ainsi que le fantôme d'un gets

chancellor

s'affalera

ffolie

N'ABOILIRA

*COMME SI*

*Une insinuation*

*au silence*

*dans quelque proche*

*voltige*

*simple*

*enroulée avec ironie*

*ou*

*le mystère*

*précipité*

*hurlé*

*tourbillon d'hilarité et d'horreur*

*autour du gouffre*

*sans le joncher*

*ni fuir*

*et en berce le vierge indice*

*COMME ISI*



*phlma solitaire éperdue*

*sauf*

que la rencontre ou l'effleure une toque de minuit  
et immobilise  
au velours chiffonné par un esclaffement sombre

cette blancheur rigide

dérisoire

en opposition au ciel  
trop  
pour ne pas marquer  
exigüment  
quiconque

pprinceamerldé l'écudil

s'en coiffe comme de l'héroïque  
irrésistible mais contenu  
par sa petite raison virile

enfoudree

*soucieux*

*expiatoire et pubère*

*mmuet*

*La lucide et seigneuriale aigrette  
au front invisible*

*scintille*

*puis ombrage*

*une stature mignonne ténébreuse*

*emscatersiondesirène*

*ppqd'âmpqtièntes squamesculitmes*

*ririre*

*que*

*SSI*

*de vertigige*

*debutit*

*le temps*

*desouffleter*

*bifurquées*

*un roc*

*faux manoir*

*tout desuite*

*évaporé en brumes*

*qui imposa*

*une borne à l'infini*

*CÉTAIT*  
*issu stellaire*

*CE SERAIT*

*pire*

*non*

*d'avantage ni moins*

*indifféremment mais autant*

LE NOMBRE

EXISTANTIEL

*autrement qu'il hallucination épars d'agonie*

COMMENCANTIEL ET CESSANTIEL

*sourdant que nié et clos quand apparu*

*enfin*

*par quelque profusion répandue en rareté*

SPECTHIFRANTIEL

*évidence d'exas somme pour peu qu'une*

ILLUMINANTIEL

L'EFFRASARD

*Chôlit*

*la plume*

*rythmique suspens d'insistance*

*s'ensevelir*

*aux écumes originelles*

*maguères d'où sursauta son délire jusqu'à une cime*

*flétrie*

*ppdr la neutralité identique du goffre*

RIEN

de la mémorable crise

ou se fût

l'évènement

accompli en vue de tout résultat nul

humain

NAURAEULIEU  
une élévation ordinaire verse l'absence

QUELELIEU

inférieur clapotis quelconque comme pour disperser l'acte vide

abruptement qui sinon

par son mensonge

eût fondé

la perte

danse ces parages

du vague

en quoi toute réalité se dissout



EXCEPTÉE

à l'altitude

PEUT ÊTRE

aussi loin qu'un endroit

fusionne avec ad delà

hors l'intérêt  
quant à lui signalé

en général

selon telle obliquité par telle déclivité

de feux

vers

ce doit être

le Septentrion aussi Nord

## UNE CONSTELLATION

fruide d'oubli et de désuétude

passant

qu'elle rénumère

sur quelque surface vacante et supérieure

le heurt successif

sidéralement

d'un compte total en formation

veillant

donating

roulant

brillant et méditant

avant de s'arrêter

à quelque point dernier qui le sacre

Toute Pensée émet un Coup de Dés

ALGORITHMIC EXTRUSIONS:  
TRANSLATIONS THROUGH  
MATHEMATICS

Unlike Pichler, who excises the text to create a field of dimensionality to the text as a whole, algorithmic translations use graphic imaging software to introduce an entirely new element of dimensionality to the text by reconfiguring and redesigning each page as a non-Euclidean entity. Through a series of algorithmic calculations, the computer program extrudes a sequence of abstract images based upon the original positions of the type on the page. Within the cyberspace continuum, these abstract Mallarméan images possess an array of spatial properties that allow for each entity to be viewed from all angles in a more Cartesian, geometric space. To create these images, I digitally reproduced Mallarmé's original, precisely recreating all the typographical characteristics of *Un Coup de dés* (such as the design, the layout, the typeface, etc.) and the topographical placement of the text on the space of the original pages. Once this mimetic operation was complete, I transferred the forgery over to a graphic editor, where the text then mutates three-dimensionally through a series of processes based upon the program's own algorithmic computations. This randomized algorithm transforms each individual letter into dendrites of signification that extrude off the shell of the page, like non-Euclidean stalagmites into a transcendent, dimensional continuum of textual space. Each algorithmic translation is thus inimitable; each image can never be recreated due to the program's seemingly aleatory function during the mathematical transliteration. While the entirety of the text experiences this kind of crystalline metamorphosis, the letters and words (along with their dimensional significations within the content of the poem) remain unscathed, preserved, since erasure technically does not occur—only a form of textual transcendence from one spatial plane to another. In this respect, these algorithmic translations can exemplify a kind of dynamic, spatial equivalence that reproduces the non-Euclidean kernels of meaning found within Mallarmé's text, while

simultaneously transporting this structural lattice of meaning into a higher, planar ascension. These algorithmic images suggest a kind of miniature “Big Bang” burst of frozen sound, photographed a few moments after the acoustical waves produced through phonetic pronunciation propagate through space. These images illustrate a new genre of computer-driven translation, or textual replication, that pushes the lexical, semantic, and structural boundaries of a text into a new realm of conceptualization.



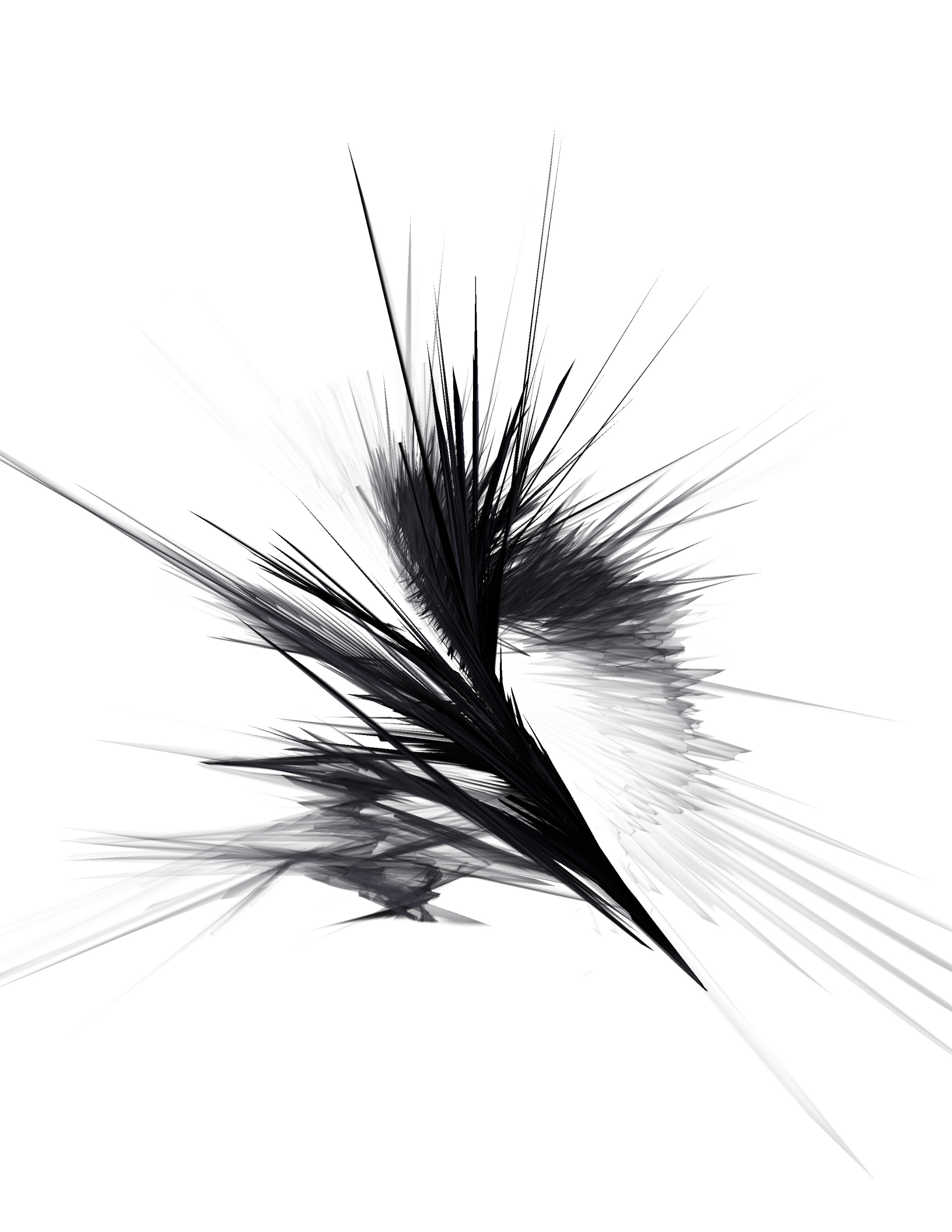




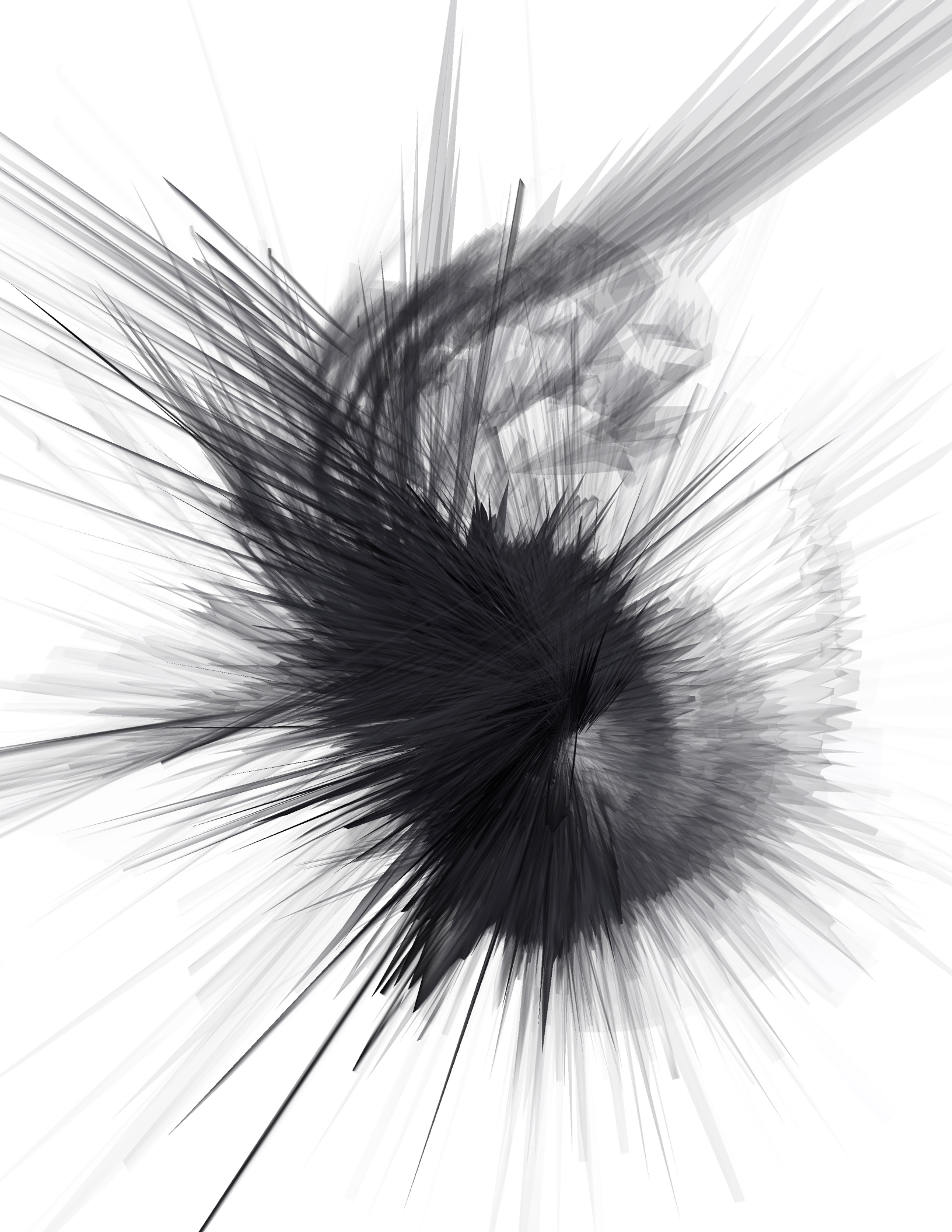
























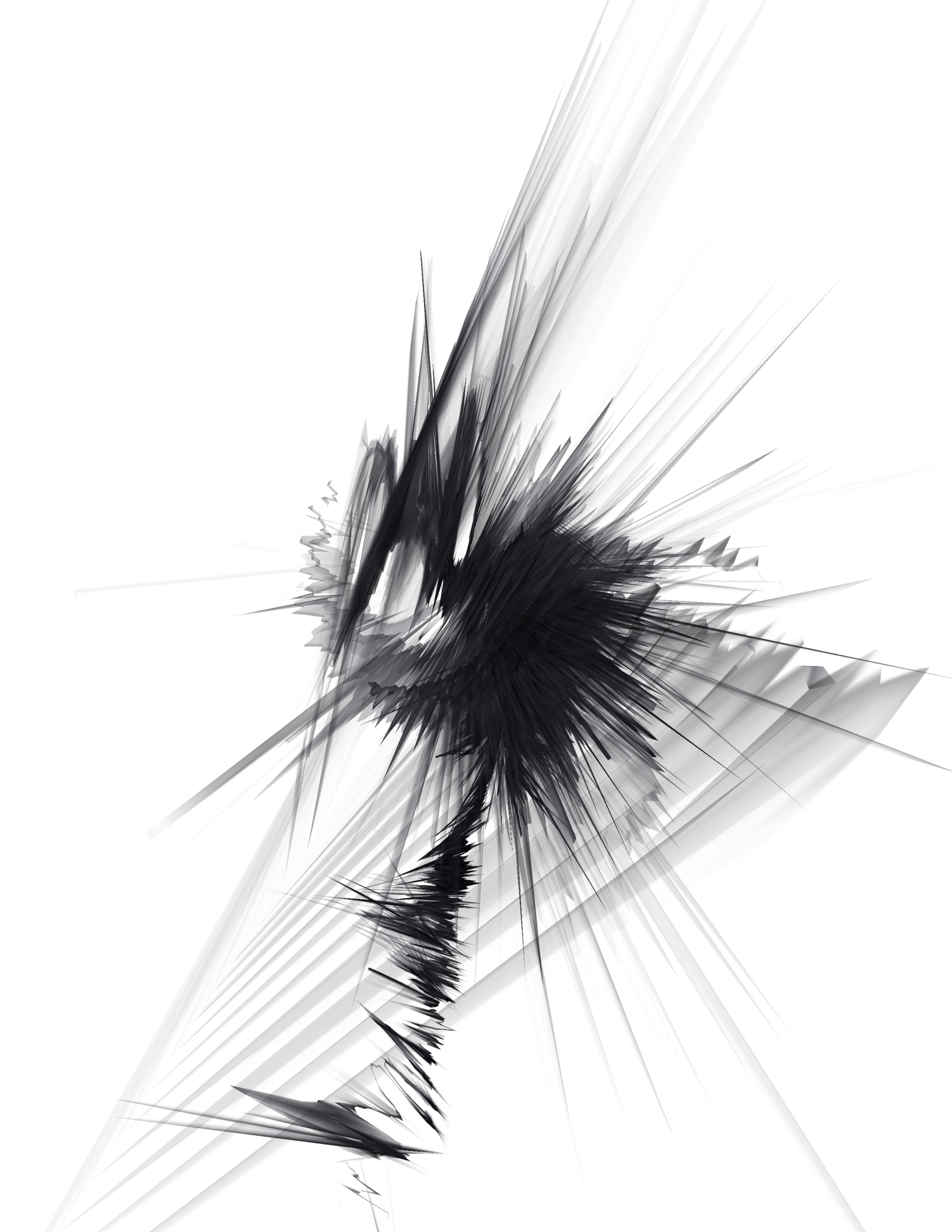


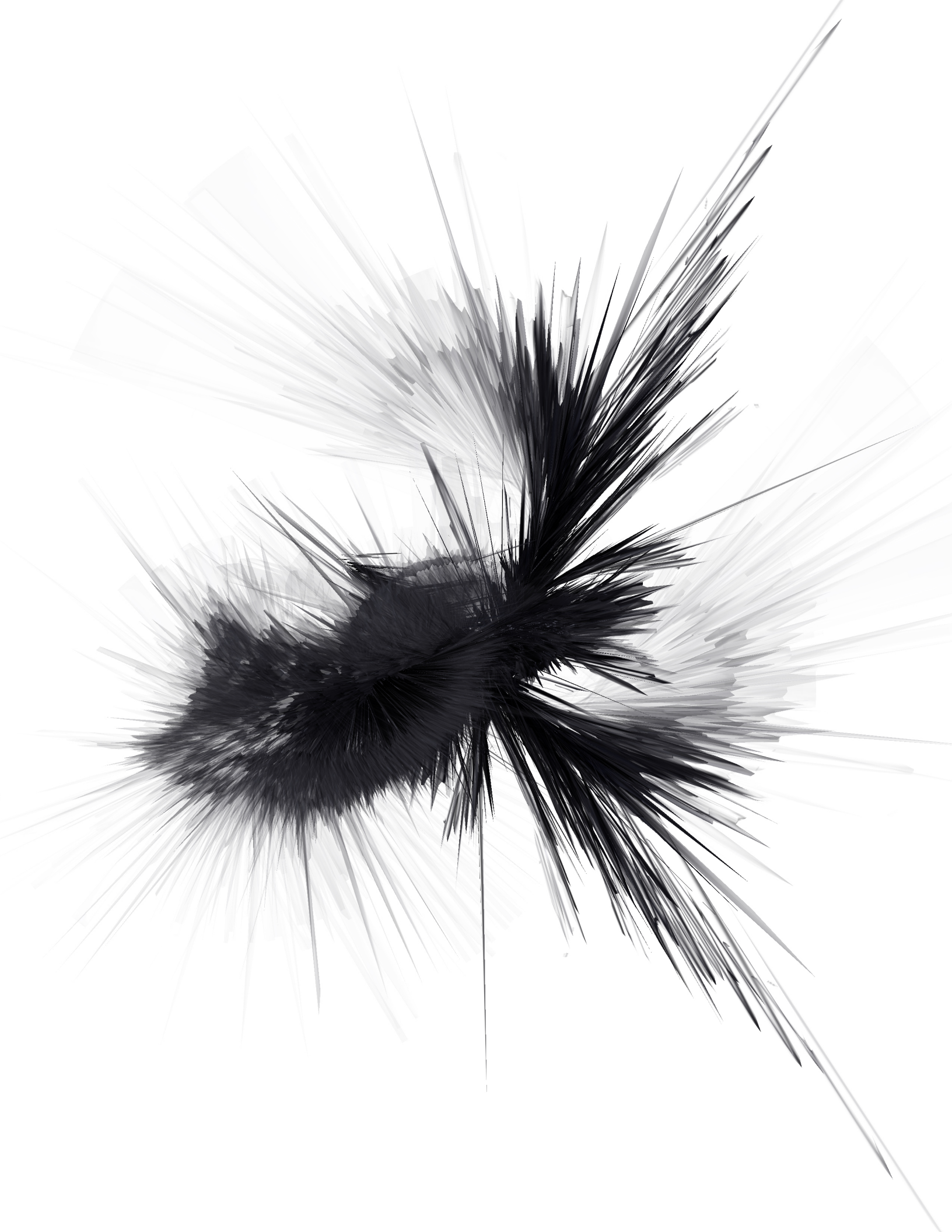
















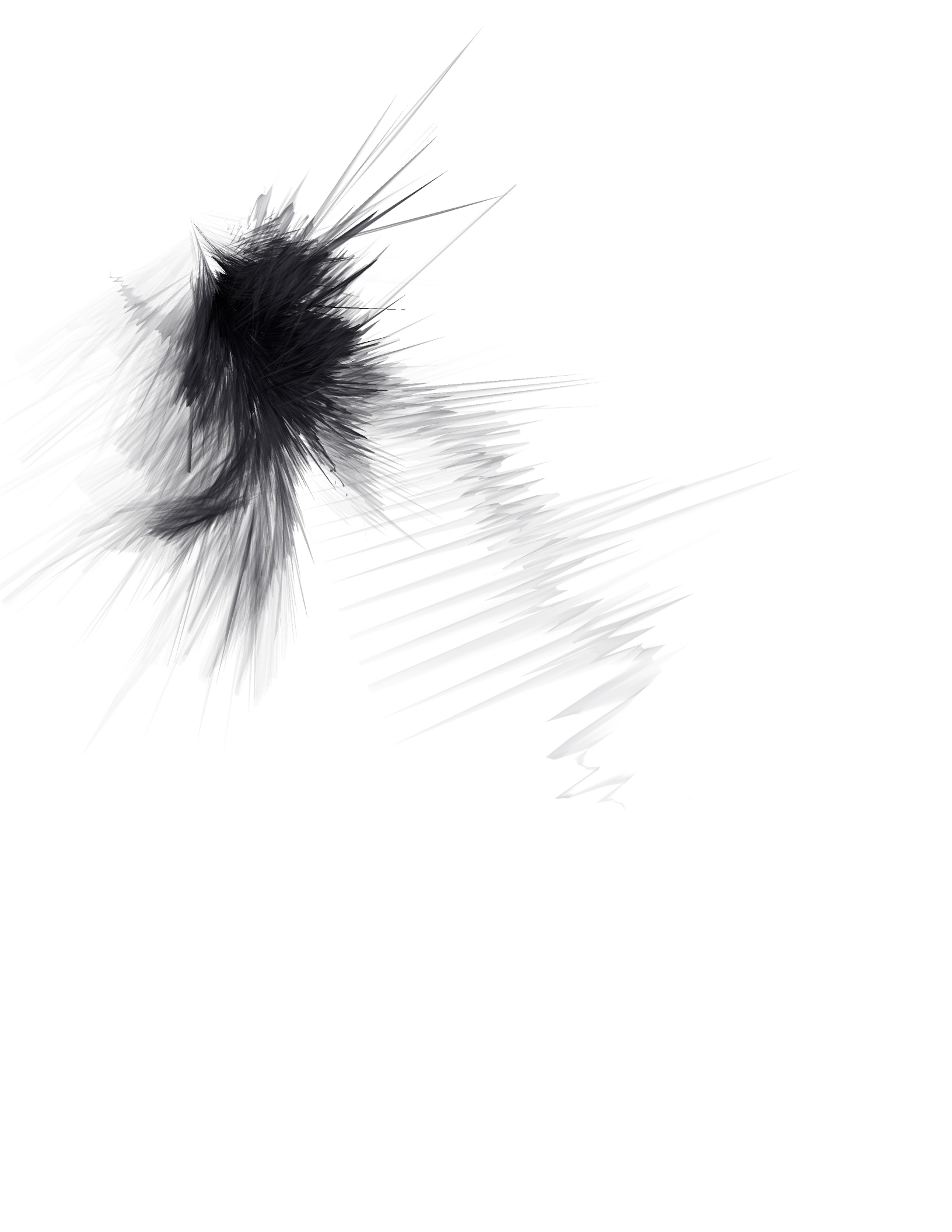


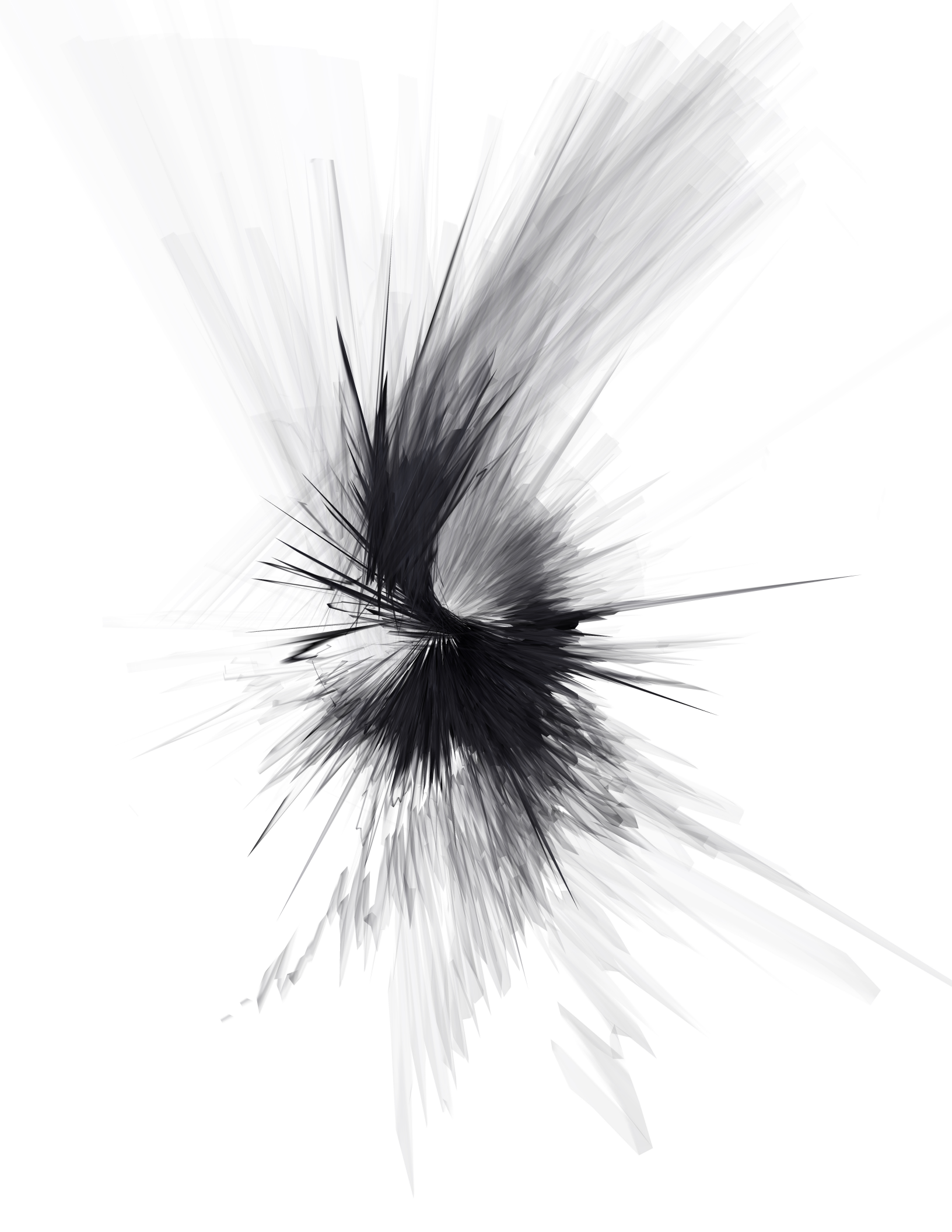












## Afterword

Computer technologies play a quintessential role in the daily mechanics that govern our lives. In *Prehistoric Digital Poetry: An Archaeology of Forms, 1959–1995*, C.T. Funkhouser remarks that “the growing numbers of digital poets—and poetry readers—reflects a burgeoning interest in the expressive capabilities of computers” (221), and the dynamic programs these computers utilize. For poets, the expressive capabilities of computers play an integral role in the composition of poetry, and creates a kind of point of departure for new avenues—new dimensions—of textual creation and exploration that could not otherwise exist, such as three-dimensional typography, computer-generated anaglyphs, and algorithmic translations. Together, these three elements not only help to expose the Cartesian field of geometric space that exists within the margins of the page, but also answers the question Jacques Derrida poses when he attempts to establish an alternative form of mimetological commentary in his venture to juxtapose Maurice Blanchot’s *L’arrêt de mort* with Percy Shelley’s *The Triumph of Life*: “[h]ow can one text, assuming its unity, give or present another [text] to be read, without touching it, without saying anything about it, practically without referring to it?” (Ulmer 91) By visually showcasing the higher-dimensional motifs of *Un Coup de dés*, these three-dimensional translations spatially neither touch nor textually alter the poem’s semantic and structural lattice. My translations illustrate the purity of the text’s dynamic and metaphysical content without overtly providing any additional commentary that would pollute the poem’s constellational beauty.

In the preface to *Un Coup de dés*, Mallarmé identifies his poem as a new genre for the expression of the most metaphysical conceptions from which poetry originates. To Mallarmé, this origination lies not within the poet, but within the higher-dimensional continuum of the page—the poet merely acts as a textual excavator rather than a creative genius. In *Un Coup de dés*,

Mallarmé exposes this higher-planar source from which the text originates through the restrictive mechanisms and apparatuses found in nineteenth century technology. With the exceeding advancements in the science of computer engineering, this higher-dimensional level of textuality edges closer and closer to visualization.

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