

Cog in the Machine

an experimental series
of visuals inspired by
posthuman theory

**format**

BOOK DESIGN

keywordsVISUAL ARTS,
POSTHUMAN,
BIOTECHNOLOGY,
EXPERIMENTAL,
ETHICS

Cog in the Machine is a book containing various experimental illustrations and visuals evolving from study of the **posthuman** theory. Through visual communication, this project aims to reimagine established design formats from a posthuman perspective.



Within thirty years, we will have the technological means to create superhuman intelligence. Shortly after, the human era will be ended.¹

- San Diego computer scientist and science fiction writer, Vernor Vinge's 1993 lecture on the technological singularity

1. "Vision 21: Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering in the Era of Cyberspace" by Vernor Vinge (1993)



format

BOOK DESIGN

keywords

VISUAL ARTS,
POSTHUMAN,
BIOTECHNOLOGY,
EXPERIMENTAL,
ETHICS

Cary Wolfe defines posthuman as a set of questions confronting us, ... when we can no longer rely on “the human” as an autonomous, rational being who provides an objective point for knowing about the world.²

2. “What is Posthumanism?” by Cary Wolfe (2009)



format

BOOK DESIGN

keywords

VISUAL ARTS,
POSTHUMAN,
BIOTECHNOLOGY,
EXPERIMENTAL,
ETHICS

In the posthuman, there are no essential differences or absolute demarcations between bodily existence and computer simulation, cybernetic mechanism and biological organism, robot teleology and human goals.³

3. "How we became posthuman" by N. Katherine Hayles (1999)



4. German philosopher
Martin Heidegger

Why posthumanism?

German philosopher **Martin Heidegger** argues that technology can provide answers as to how we understand what's around us and that it shouldn't be positioned as “other” or separate from the human.⁵

5. The Question Concerning Technology by Martin Heidegger (1954)

If advancements in artificial intelligence and biotechnology are able to build conscious and intelligent robots, what are the ethical implications?

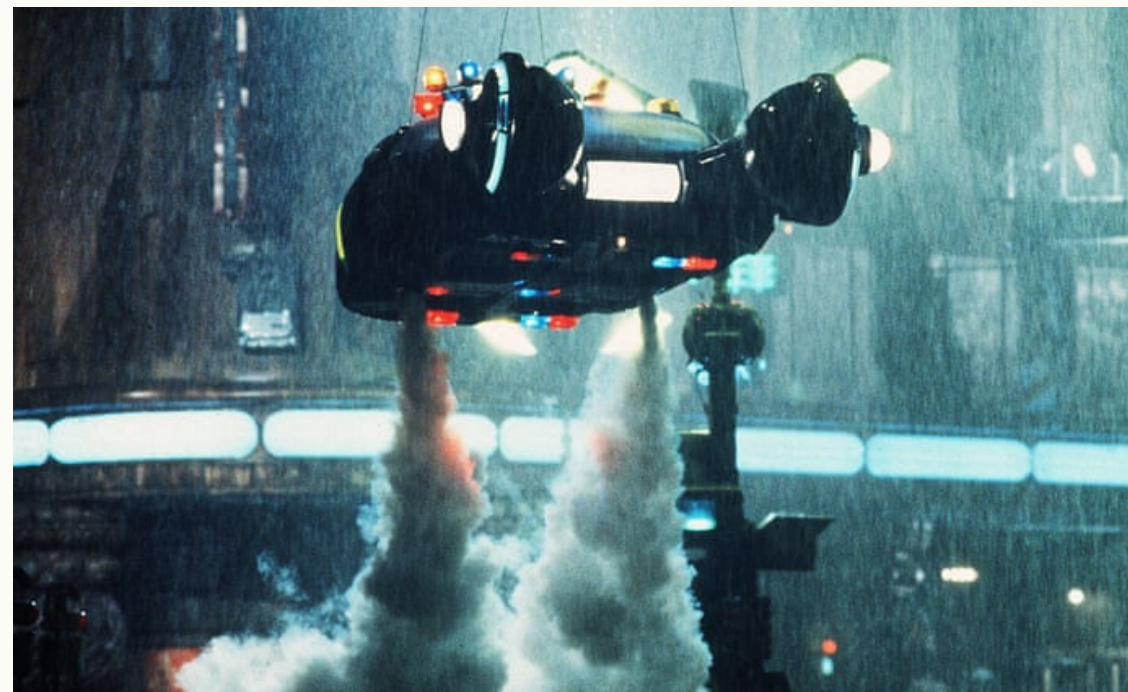
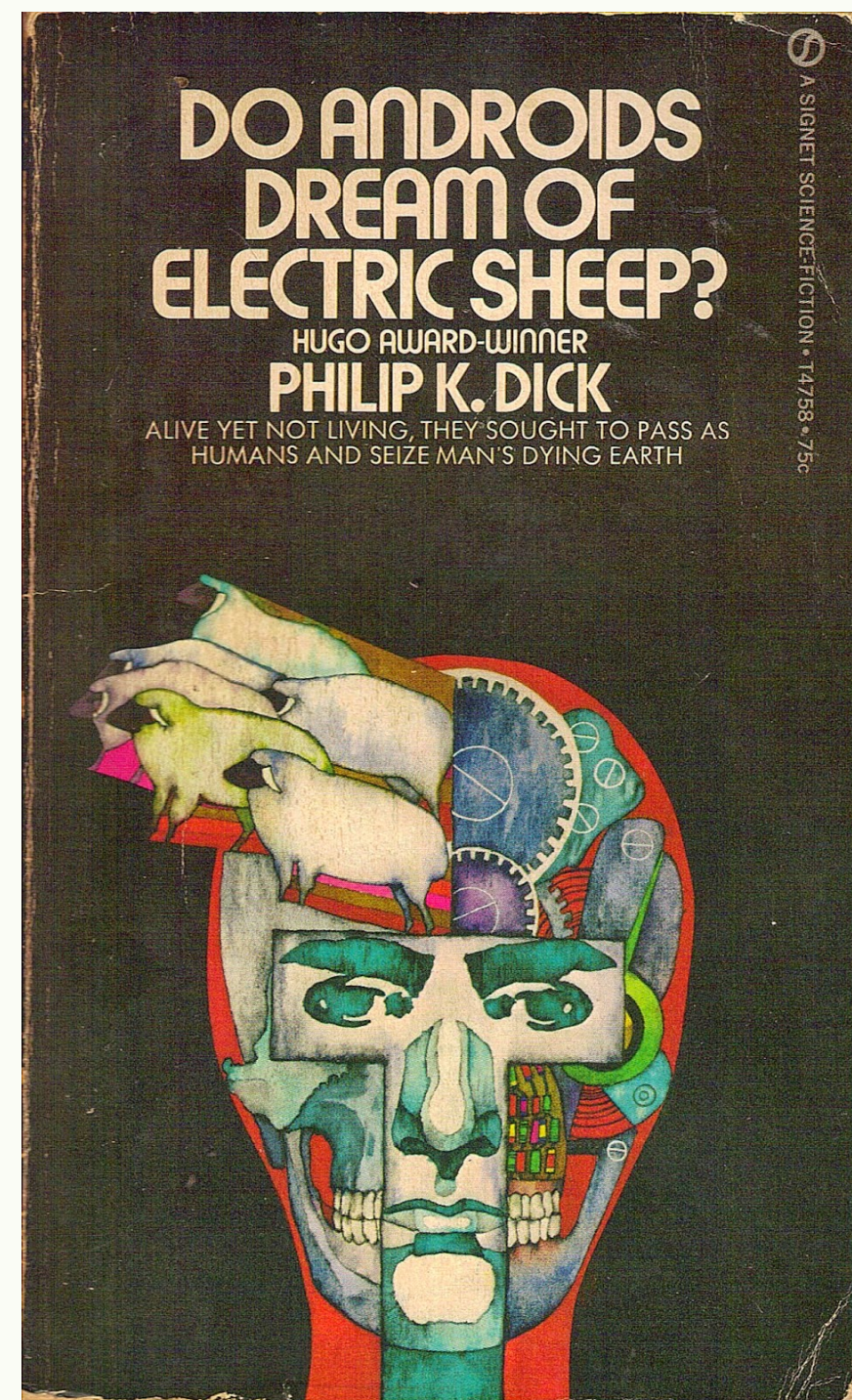


format

BOOK DESIGN

keywords

VISUAL ARTS,
POSTHUMAN,
BIOTECHNOLOGY,
EXPERIMENTAL,
ETHICS



6. Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? by Philip K. Dick (1968)

7. Police spinner vehicle in Ridley Scott's Blade Runner (1982)

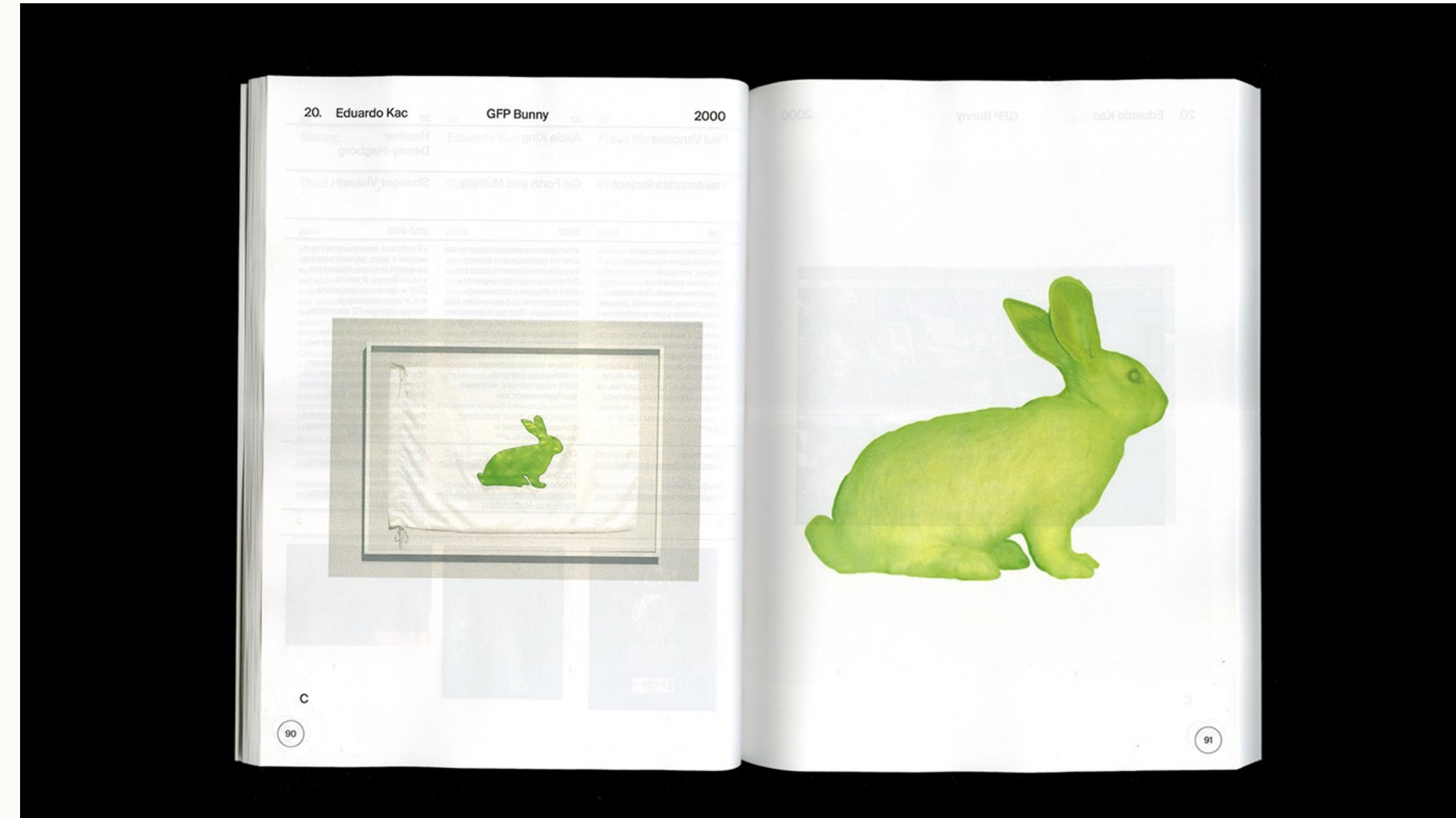
8. Joi hologram in Dennis Villeneuve's Blade Runner 2049 (2017)

ADDRESSING ETHICAL ISSUES

What is the role of visual arts?

More than making visible the invisible, art needs to raise our awareness of what firmly remains beyond our visual reach but, nonetheless, affects us directly. Two of the most prominent technologies operating beyond vision are digital implants and genetic engineering.⁹

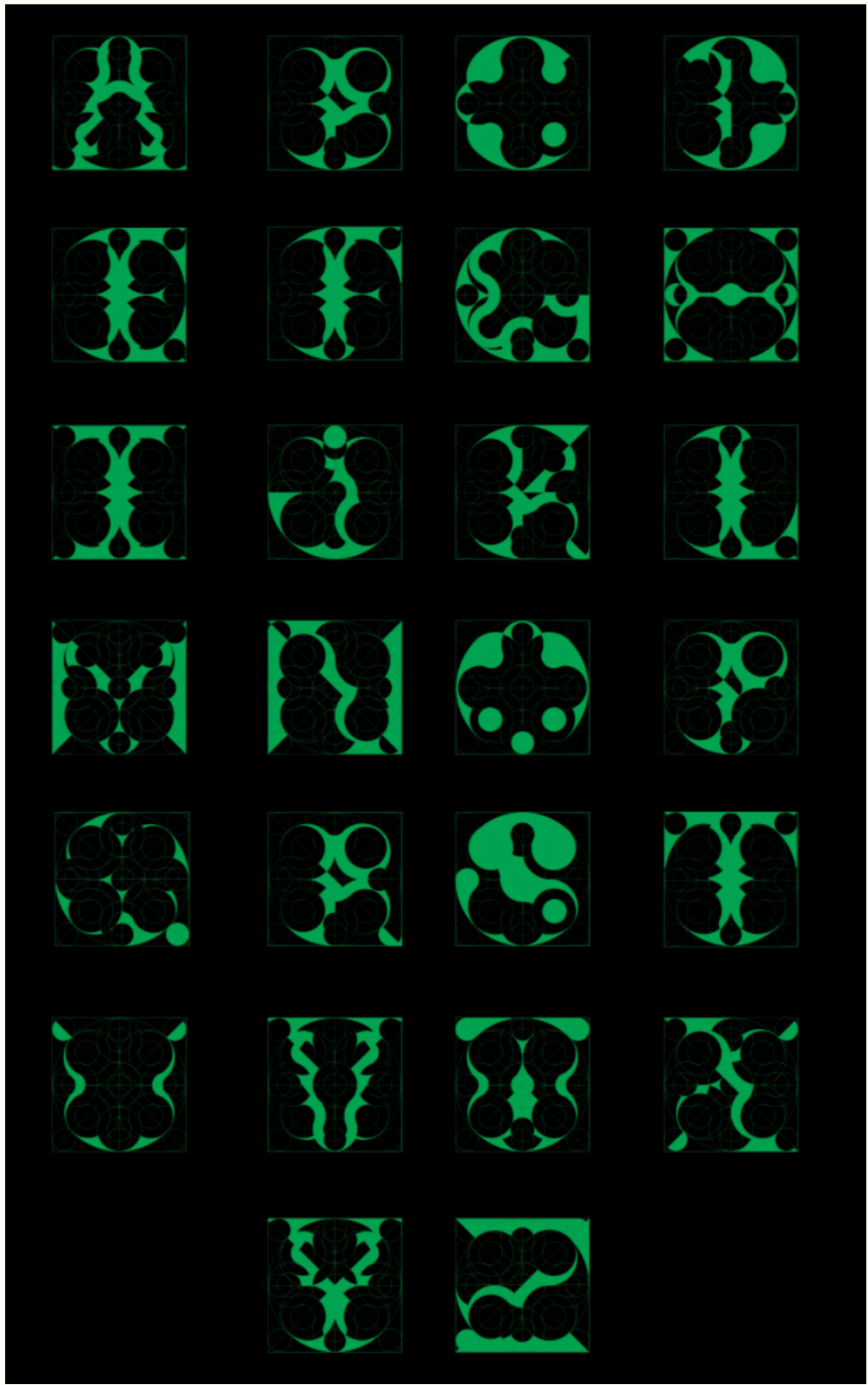
9. "Transgenic Art" by Eduardo Kac (1998)



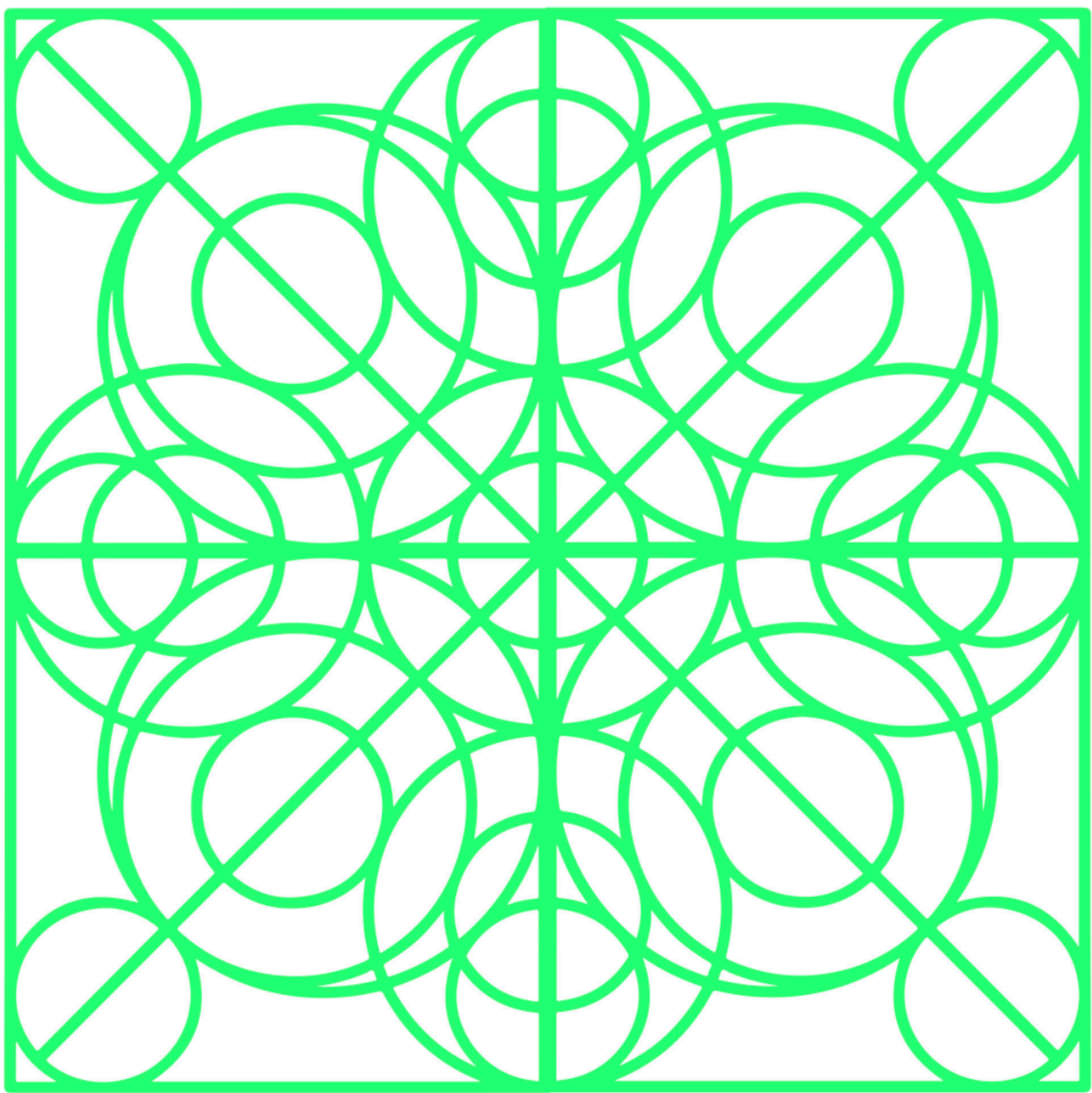
10. Eduardo Kac's GFP (Green Florescent Protein) Bunny, Alba (2000)

keywords

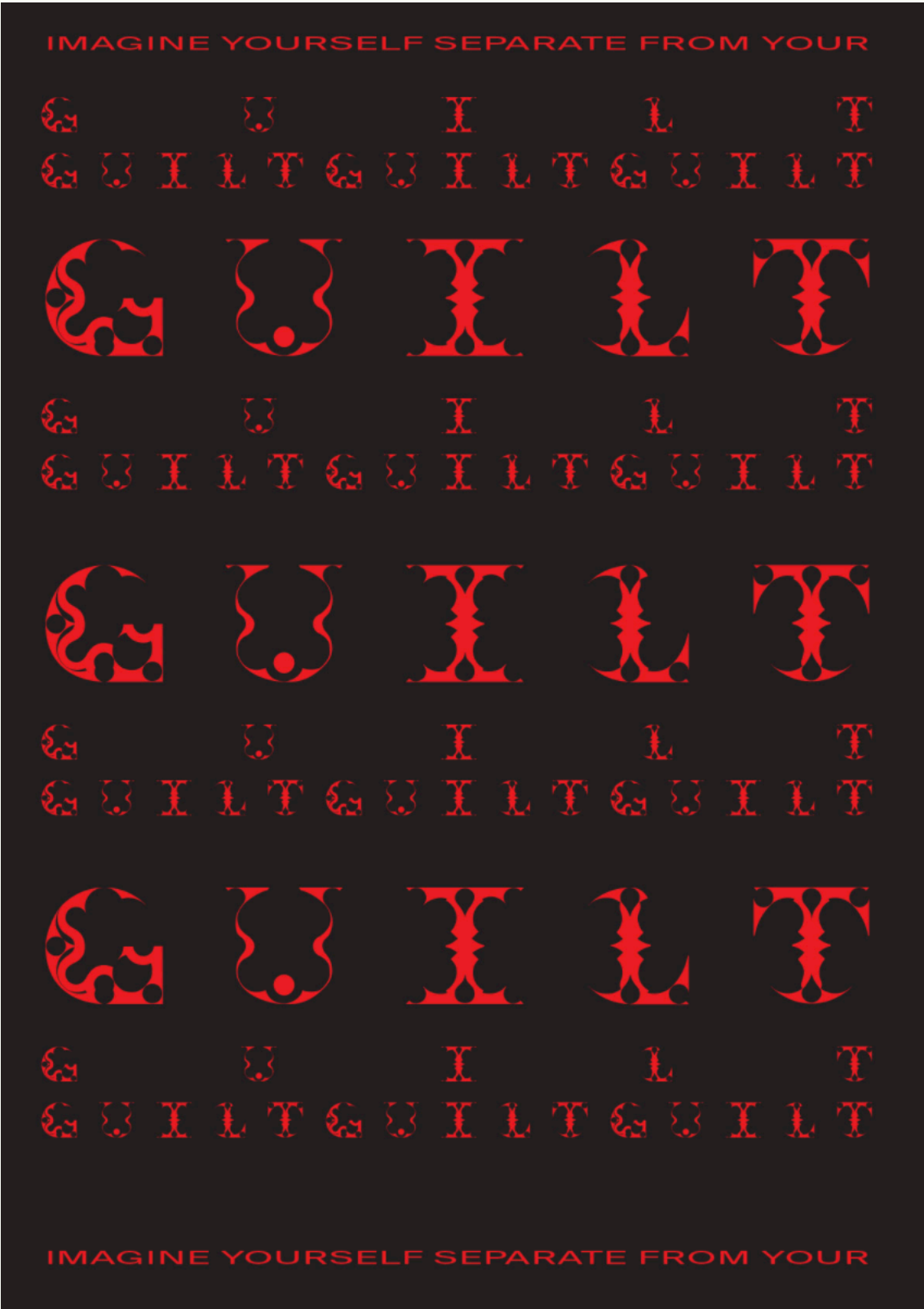
VISUAL ARTS,
POSTHUMAN,
BIOTECHNOLOGY,
EXPERIMENTAL,
ETHICS



11. “Mulcom”, a typeface expressing the forms of a formant slime mould encapsulated in the boundaries of a petri dish (2009)



12. A grid created to investigate how letter forms can follow the structures created by a slime mould at microscopic level (2009)



13. “Imagine Yourself Separate from Your Guilt”. A poster using the typeface Mulcum to question if ideological barriers of living with guilt can be surmounted through practising a life imitating what we know about the intelligence of slime mould (2009)



**format**

BOOK DESIGN

keywordsVISUAL ARTS,
POSTHUMAN,
BIOTECHNOLOGY,
EXPERIMENTAL,
ETHICS

Outcome

- Experimental book design (80-100 pg)

Featuring graphics inspired by research on
advancing developments in biotechnology and
ethical issues from a posthuman perspective

Topics include (non-exhaustive)

1. Stem-cell research
2. Gene editing systems
3. 3D Printed Organs
4. Brain Signals to Audible Speech

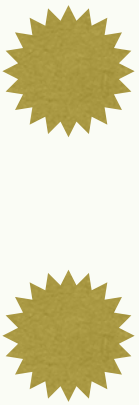


1. Existing research papers

- Stem-cell research
- Gene editing systems
- 3D Printed Organs
- Brain Signals to Audible Speech

2. Hands-on visits to laboratories (prospects)

- BioMedical Engineering Research Centre (BMERC) NTU
- Imagen Labs
- Genetic Modification Advisory Committee (GMAC)
- Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology (IBN)

- 
1. To bridge the worlds of visual arts and engineering/science
 2. To reimagine established design formats from a posthuman perspective
 3. To participate in the dialogue on the ethics of advancements in bioengineering as a visual artist



2020	OCT	Complete readings, visit laboratories, curate content
	NOV	Experiment with art styles and set style
	DEC	Complete narrative, begin execution— Simultaneously work on thesis structure
2021	JAN	Complete first draft for review
	FEB	1st review and refinement
	MAR	2nd review and refinement
	APR	Completion of project, compilation of thesis

bibliography

1. Vinge, V. (1993). Vision 21: Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering in the Era of Cyberspace.
2. Wolfe, C. (2010). What is posthumanism? (p. 49). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
3. Hayles, N. (1999). How we became posthuman (p. 3). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
4. Img: <https://holybooks-lichtenbergpress.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/Martin-Heidegger.jpg>
5. Heidegger, M. (1954). The question concerning technology, and other essays.
6. Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep? by Philip K. Dick (1968) <http://hypnogoria.blogspot.com/2014/09/sffaudio-podcast-do-androids-dream-of.html>
7. Police spinner vehicle in Ridley Scott's Blade Runner (1982) <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-18026277>
8. Joi hologram in Dennis Villeneuve's Blade Runner 2049 (2017) <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/films/0/blade-runner-2049-callbacks-references-original-movie/>
9. Eduardo Kac's GFP (Green Florescent Protein) Bunny, Alba (2000) https://miro.medium.com/max/1400/1*aRKp3Ov-BQsxOBadHCNzvA.jpeg
10. Kac, E. (2001). Transgenic Art. Artnodes, 0(1). doi: 10.7238/a.v0i1.676
- 11.-13. <https://aedanclark.com/muculm-slime-mold-typeface>

