

Beyond Grids: Interactive Graphical Substrates  
to Structure Digital Layout

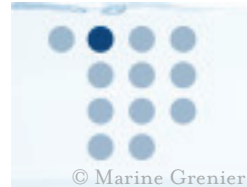
# StoryPortraits

Nolwenn Maudet

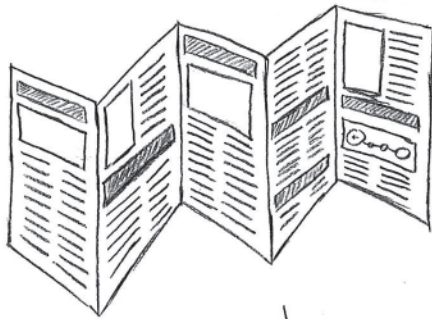
P<sub>I</sub>

From a Brochure to a Website :  
turning into a Navigation Map

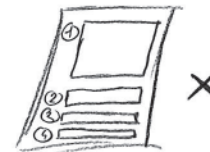
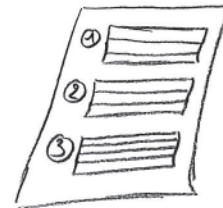
I started from  
a brochure that I  
had to turn into  
a website



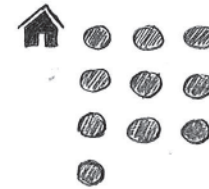
then I try  
to create a hierarchy



I first list  
and categorize  
important items.



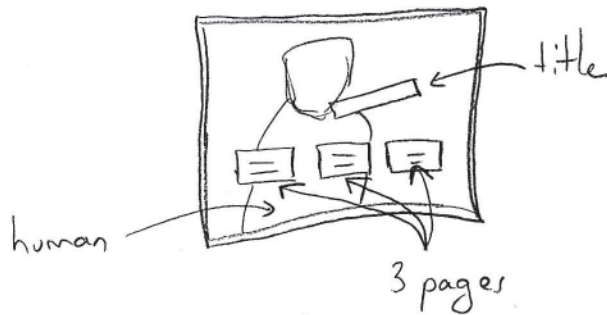
the different categories  
must be homogenous  
in quantity and typology



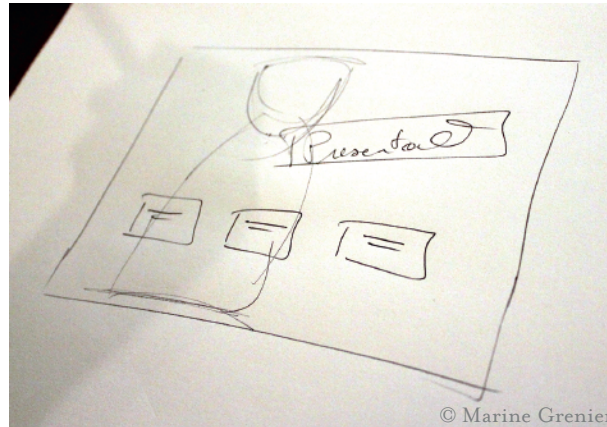
after this, I  
could create my  
navigation principle:  
a map.

## Everything is Planned on Paper

“ All master pages  
work the same way:  
I have a kind of grid ”

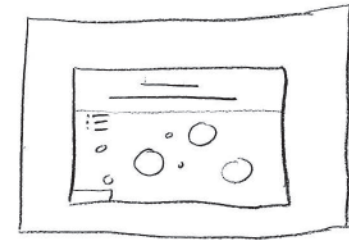


it's a global  
positionning.  
They have to  
have the same look




only graphical  
elements are  
designed in Photoshop.  
Everything else was  
prepared on paper

everything  
is flexible, even  
though I plan as  
much as I can



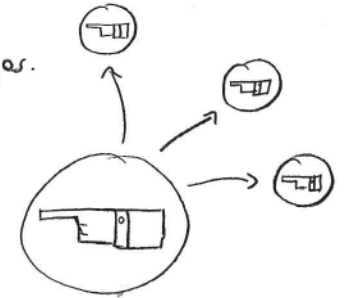
in inner-pages,  
I created a frame  
inside the frame,  
to give more space  
to the content.

## Reuse Elements with Dynamic Layers

in   
I create one page  
first and then  
I develop it.



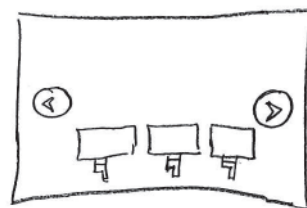
I use dynamic  
layers to  
propagate  
any changes.



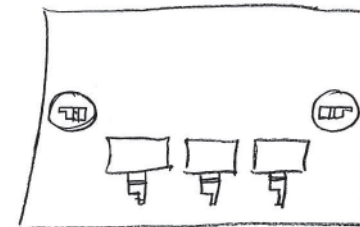
I then made  
it more coherent  
by choosing only hands

first I position  
all the content

and then I  
adorn it according to  
the style guide

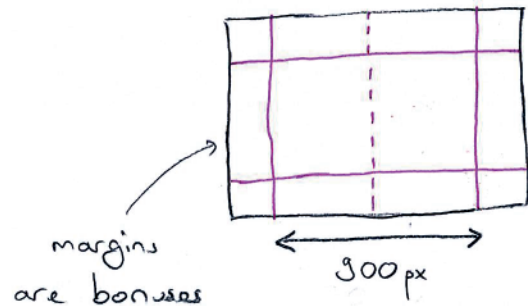
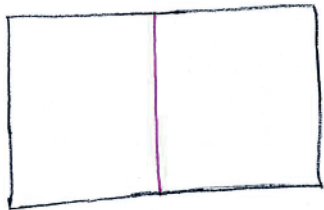


at first  
I had created  
both arrows and  
hands for navigating

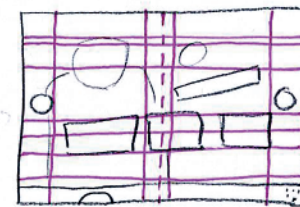
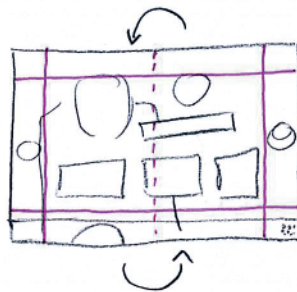


## Guides Creation & Duplication

I define my structure with guides.



then I work  
on the content



when the first page  
is over, I put the guides  
that I will reuse on  
my other pages.



© Marine Grenier

I always  
duplicate my file to  
start a new page

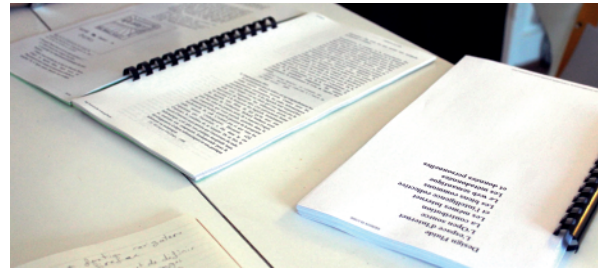


P2

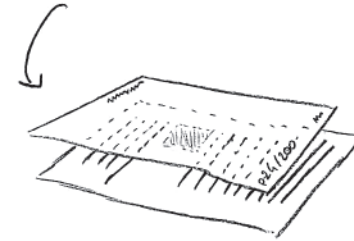
# Styling a Semantic Category


I worked with  
markdown.  
I applied it  
in advance,  
while writing

Title ← here is  
===== a title



" just before  
printing, the system  
adds a layer of  
metadata;  
I played  
with it. "



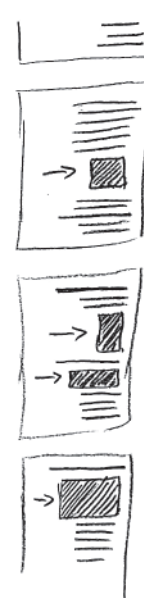
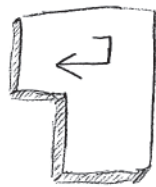
in   
this is very tedious,  
you have  
to select everything

" here, everything  
was fast. "

float: right;

1. rule

you  
push  
enter



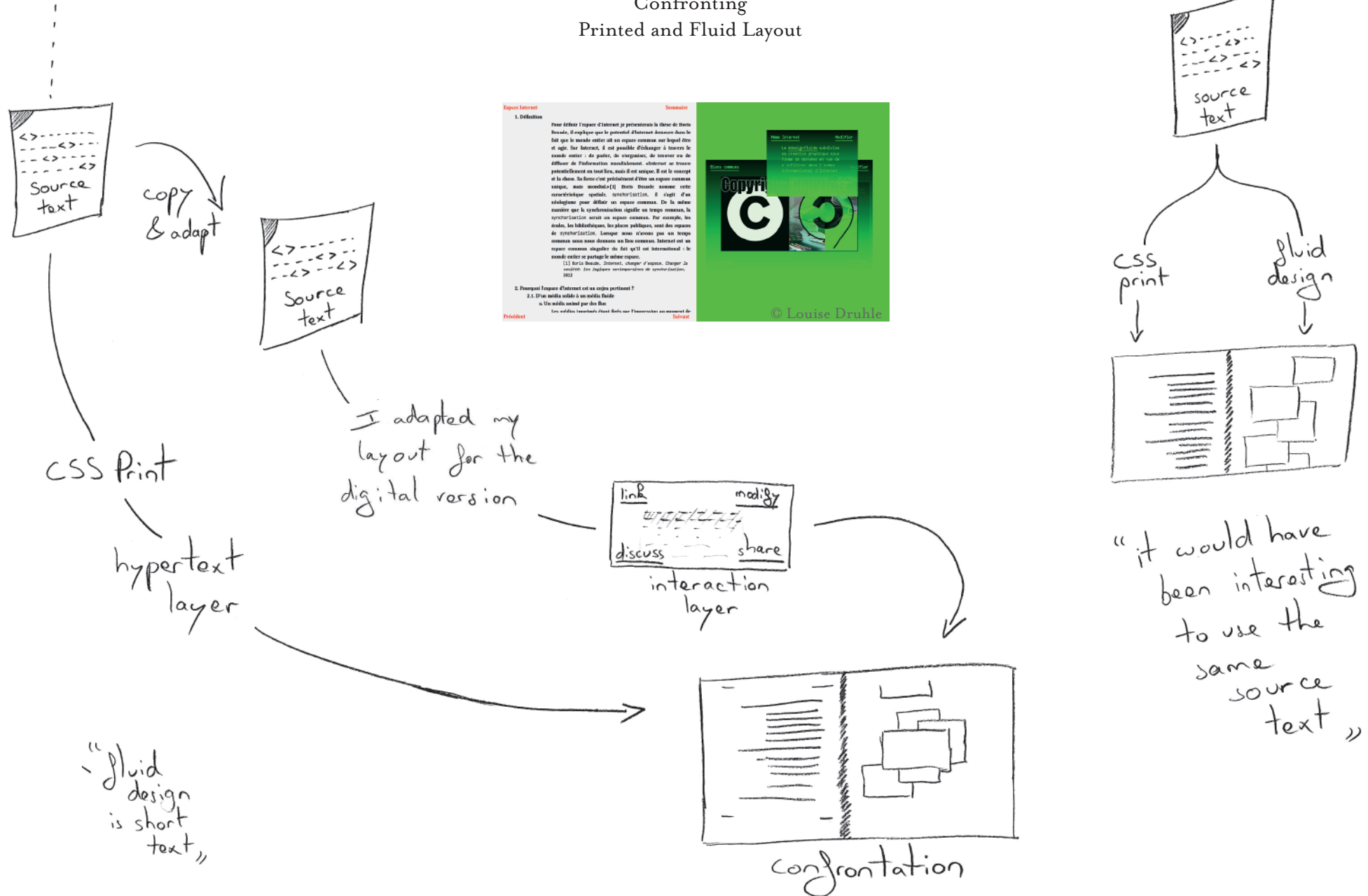
all the  
images  
go to the  
same place

it is easy  
to modify  
things.

no manual  
execution

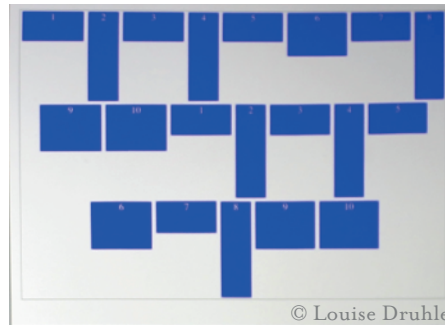


# Confronting Printed and Fluid Layout

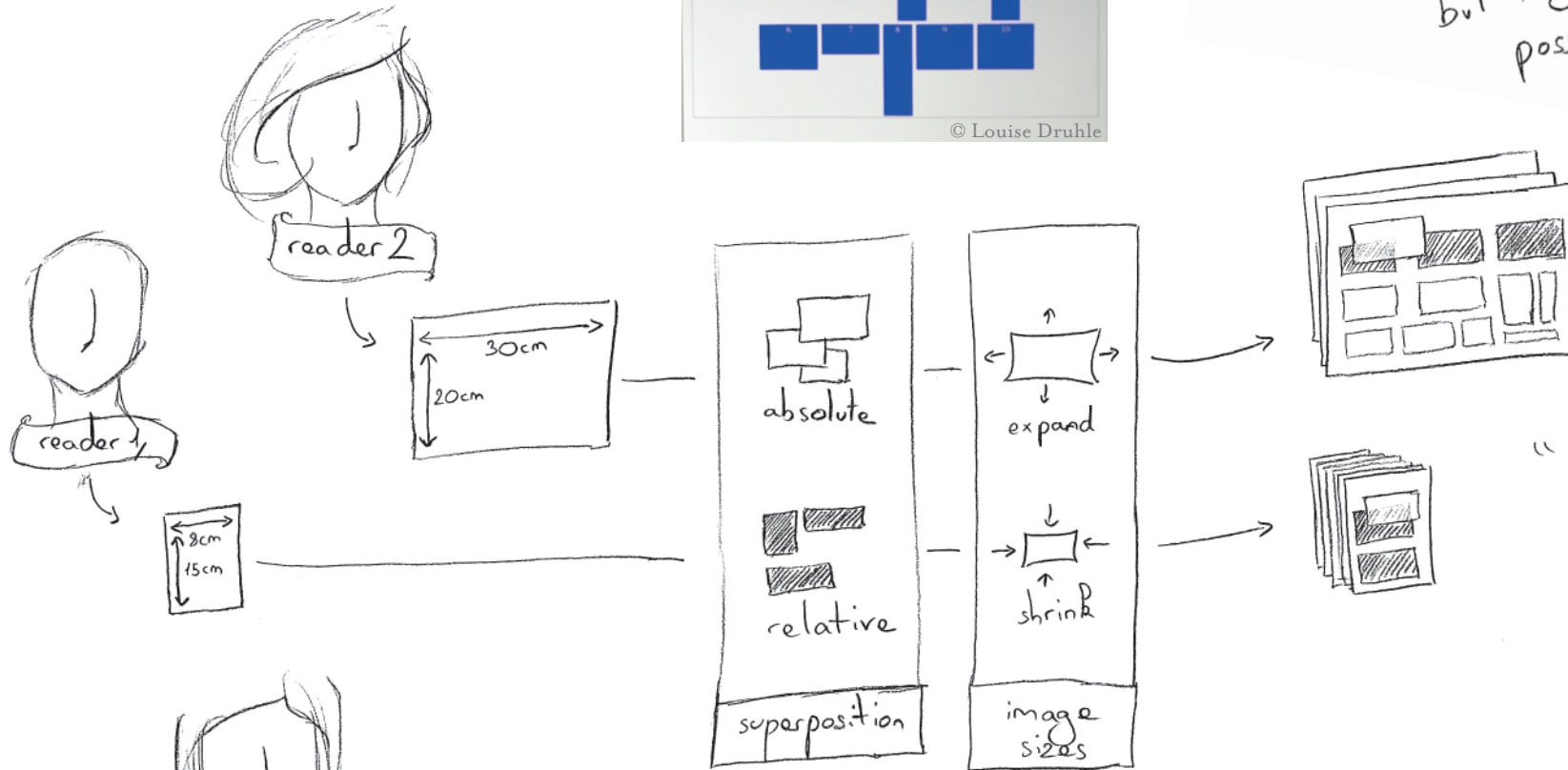


"I twist this tool  
used to create web pages  
and I use it to  
create hardcopies,,

# Individual Printing Rules



"there is not  
one final object  
but infinite  
possibilities,,



"I will never  
see the final  
object,,

I try them  
with sample text,  
like a pattern.

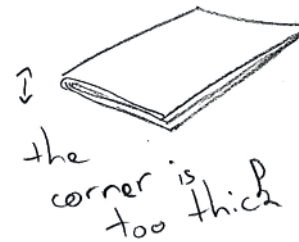
## The Inevitable Pleats Grid



“ I knew that  
the pleats were  
going to be there ”



So I played on a  
simple centered layout



“ I had to manually  
move text to avoid  
all the future  
holes ”



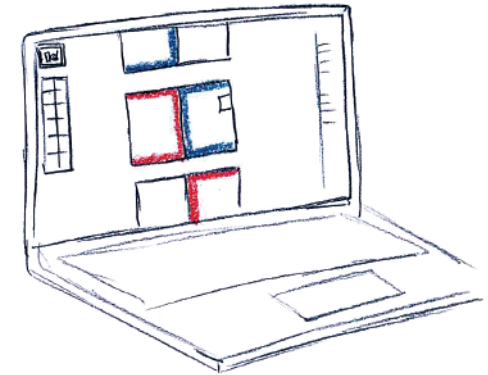
## A Reverse Process


To get the results,  
you have to tear  
the pages up.

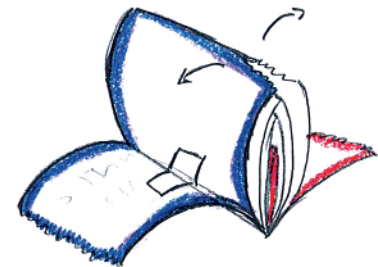


© Louise Druhle

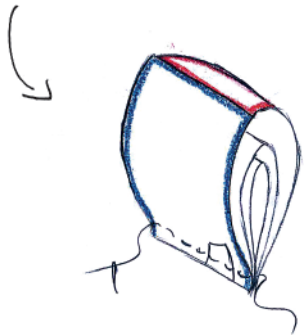
I see the book  
as an architecture,  
the structure is on  
the object level.



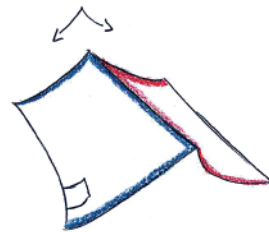
the  document  
was just a set  
of A4 pages, it made  
no sense



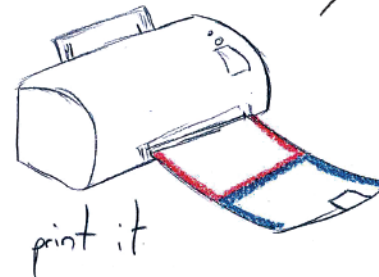
I had to imagine  
what it was going  
to look like



bind it



fold it



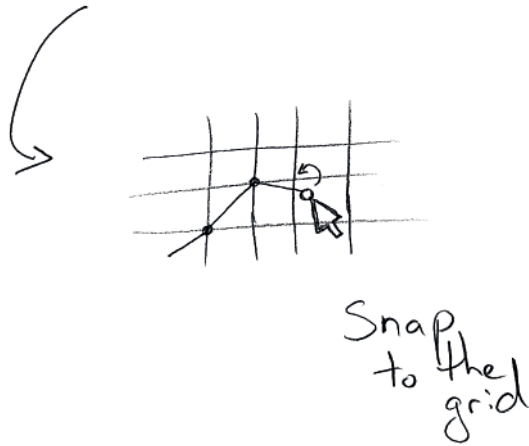
print it



P3

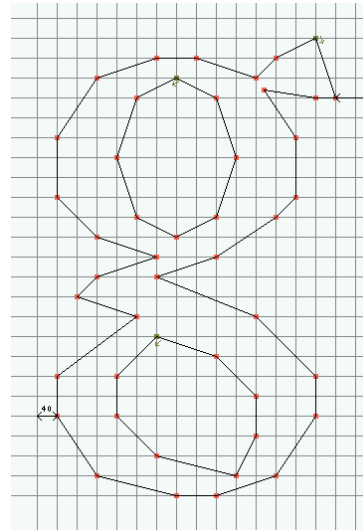
# A Collaborative Font created with a Grid

"I used a grid  
in order to quickly  
create a font that  
could be a collaborative  
one,,

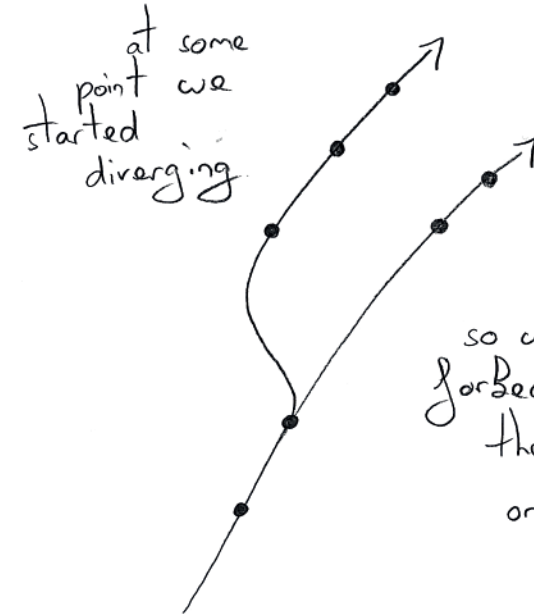


I created  
a first draft  
in Inkscape for  
some letters.

now  
we use  
integers  
instead of a grid  
(3;25)

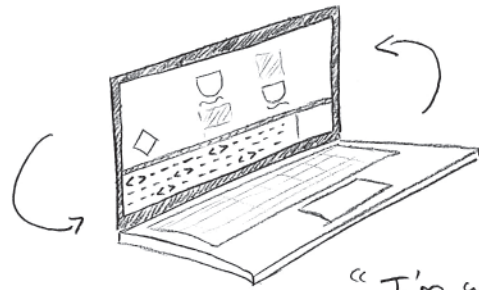


Raphaël Bastide



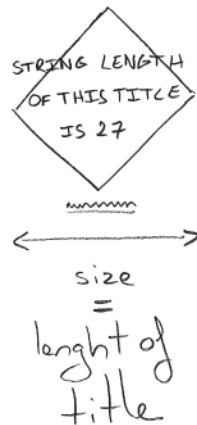
"the grid creates  
constraints that  
allow us to  
collaborate,,

# CNEAI : Rules for Dynamic Content



"I'm working  
in the browser  
so I have  
instant feedback"

I wrote a program  
that generates header  
crests



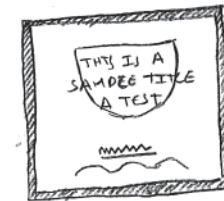
LE RAYON DIY, LA  
PETITE BIBLIOTHÈQUE  
DU VOYAGE LATÉRAL,  
ATELIER COLLECTIF  
MOBILE, SYSTÈME D,  
DO IT YOURSELF,  
OPEN SOURCE DE  
STÉPHANE MAGNIN

EXPOSITION

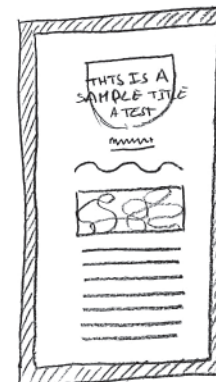
DU 11-10-2014 AU 23-11-2014



Raphaël Bastide



on the oldest  
news, images  
are removed  
 $n=15$



after a  
while, text  
is removed  
 $n=6$

I created  
rules because all  
news had to  
be on 1 page

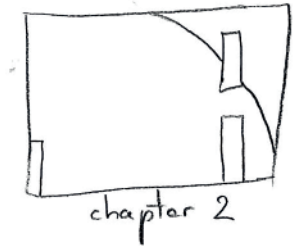
G\*\*\*\*\* :  
Generating Aesthetic Diversity

I wanted to  
work on the unity  
of the picture

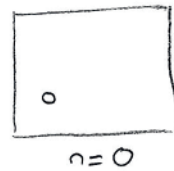


Raphaël Bastide

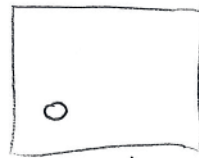
I need constraints,  
it helps me in  
my esthetic research



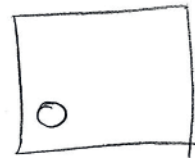
...



$n=0$



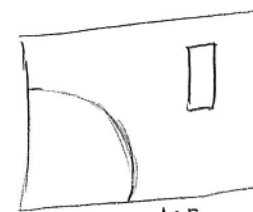
$n=10$



$n=20$



$n=85$

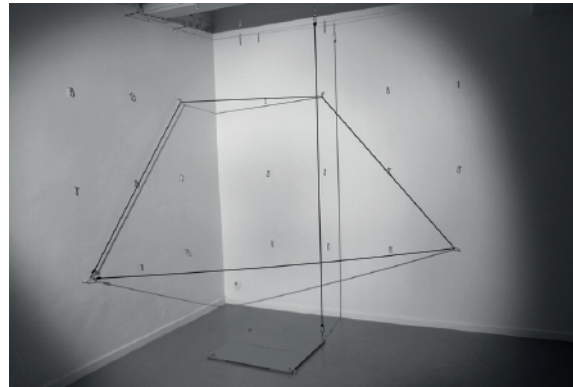


$n=125$

“ I try to find  
the shortest functions  
that produce the  
greatest graphical  
diversity ”

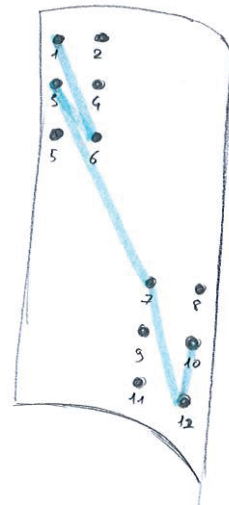
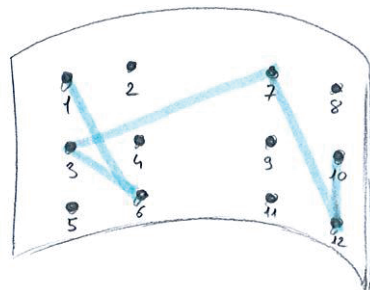
# Decentralized and Versioned Art

"this is a decentralized  
versioned artwork"

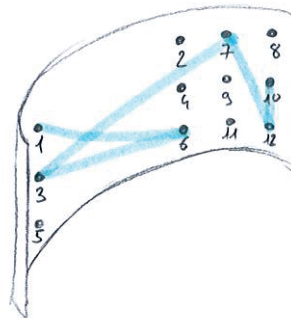


Raphaël Bastide

"it's a family,  
they all have  
the same number  
of hooks,  
the same logic,"

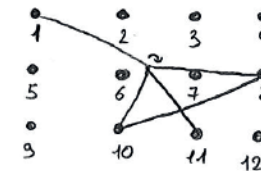


"I created a code to  
describe the string  
path."



once, there was a  
hole in the documentation  
language so I had to  
improve it to remove  
the ambiguity

C2/1:8:10:(>1:8)11



P<sub>4</sub>

Poeticon Astronomicon  
Stars as knock-out



© Fanette Mellier

I found a fac-simile  
on google books

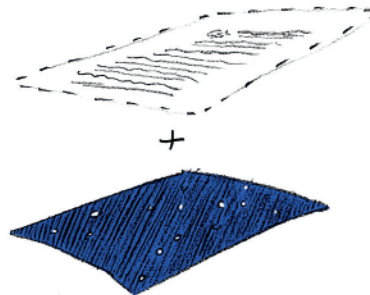


I extracted  
the text

I extracted  
all specks of dust  
one by one

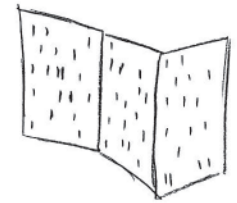
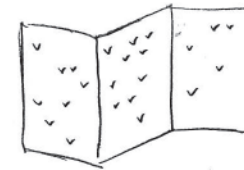
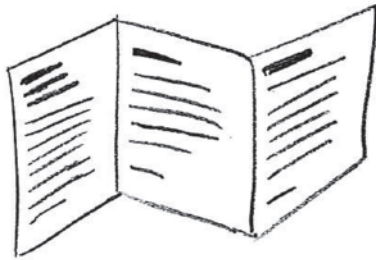


I used them  
as knock out  
in a deep blue  
layer



Keeping only "c"'s to create  
an Abstract Landscape

To create  
an abstract version,  
I start from  
the flyer

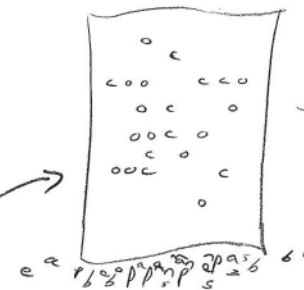


I reused  
the same  
principle for  
several programs.

I vectorize  
the text

It becomes  
an image

I remove  
all letters  
but c & o



# Creating a Hierarchy only with Repetitions and Colors

I wanted to see if it  
was possible to organize  
a layout without using common  
typography hierarchy

I set myself a constraint:  
Helvetica 12pt

~~italic~~  
~~bold~~  
~~10pt 20pt~~

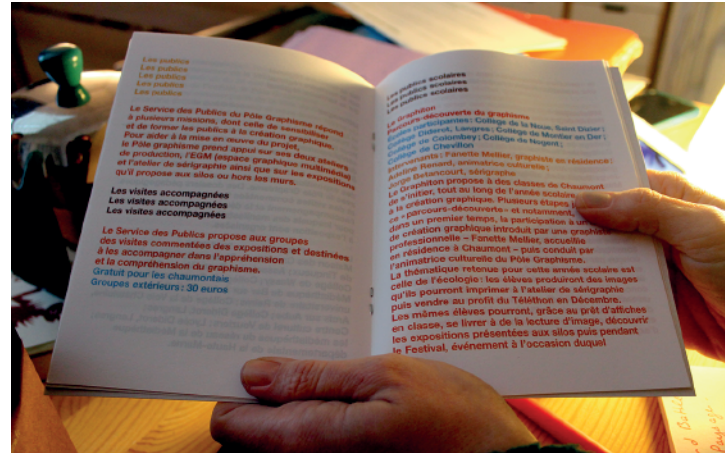
repeat  
5 times  
for a title

title  
title  
title  
title  
title

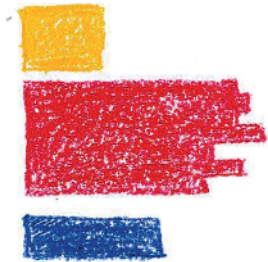
subtitle  
subtitle  
subtitle

repeat 3 times  
for a subtitle

the repetition  
creates visual  
masses



© Fanette Mellier



I also used  
color to  
code elements

# Cutting inside Layers to Reveals Colors after Printing

It's a simple  
pocket-book layout

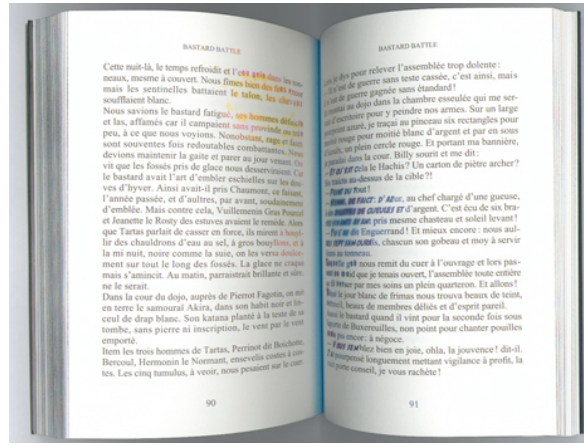
but fonts and colors  
**appear**  
oddly and organically

I had to  
create a hack.

I created 50 fonts

— word —  
word  
word  
word  
word  
word  
...

with the same  
bearing as the  
original

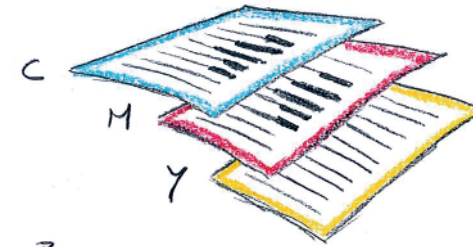


© Fanette Mellier

for the colors  
I work with **Ps**  
on the final file



I cut  
parts of  
the color  
layers



As printing is  
an additive process,  
it reveals colors.

I couldn't see  
the result  
before printing



P5

# Excel Templates to be reused by non-designers

I was working  
for a local administration

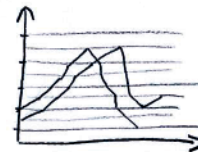
→ they had their functions  
in excel



and they wanted  
to be able to reuse  
my work the next years

So I created  
an excel master

→ to create their  
charts






© Emeline Brulé

so that they could  
reuse it all  
without a designer

and I could even  
set the page length

A Layout entirely Based  
on the Number 42

" I worked only  
with multiples of  
the number 42 "

① color

C 42%

M 42%

Y 42%

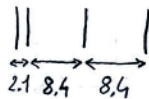
K 42%

② font-size

8,4 pt

12,6 pt

③ grid



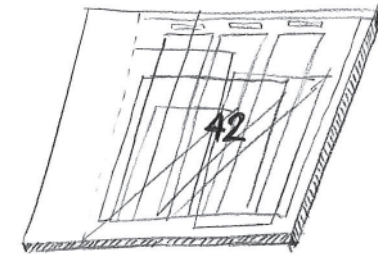
④ line widths



2,1mm

1,05mm

4,2mm



the cover is  
made of the different  
grids I've used  
in the whole book.

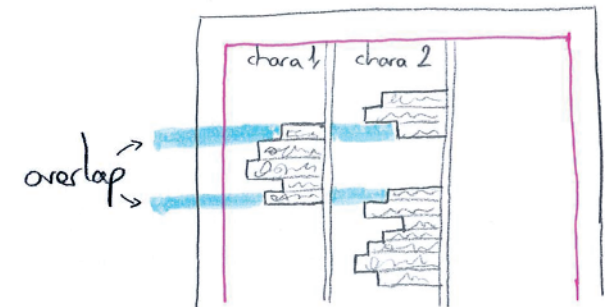


# Overlapping Content rather than Modifying the Grid

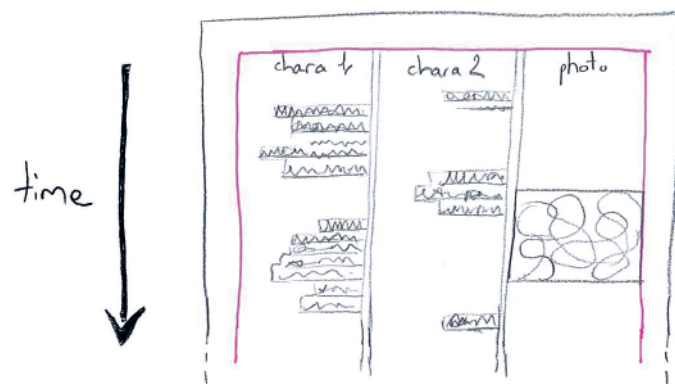
on the 4th book,  
I had to create  
visual blockings



© Emeline Brulé



You can follow the  
different characters.



I won't modify  
the grid

but I sometimes  
needed to overlap  
some of the dialogue

# Creating Constraints based on the Book Architecture



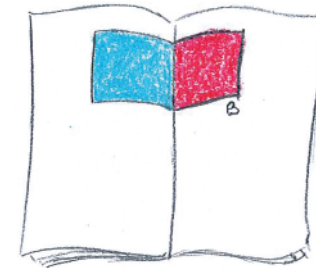
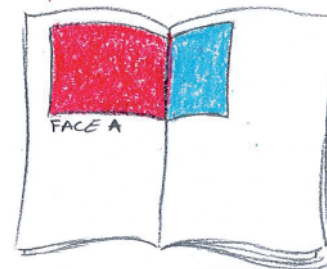
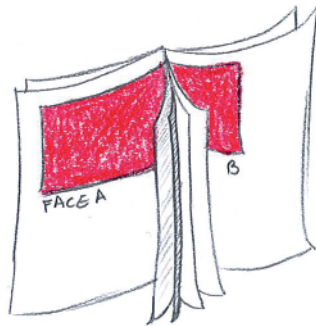
© Emeline Brulé

I have the same  
grid in the whole book

but I mistreated  
it a lot with  
the images

"it adds a new  
constraint for  
later."

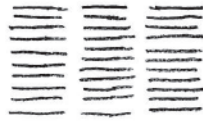
I create a confrontation  
between two images.



the rest of  
the picture  
goes to another  
page

# Overriding the Grid

I have a well defined grid



①



②

The text remains inside the grid but changes its orientation



The grid is completely overridden by the "crazy" typography

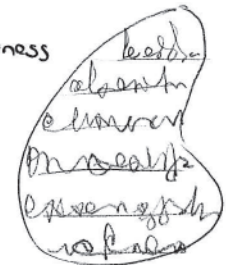


③



④

the zombie crazyness is contained in a shape



© Emeline Brulé

P6

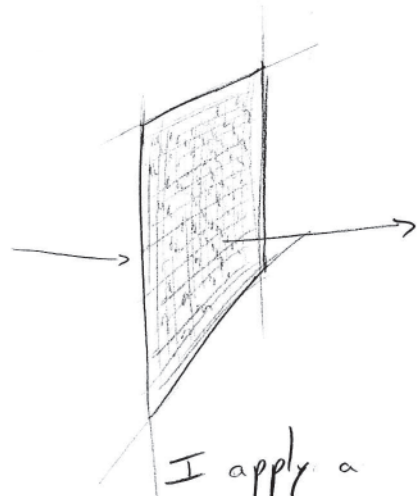
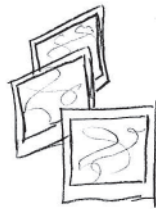
## Filtering Images and Collage



© Frédéric Teschner

I work with low  
quality pictures

I affirm the pixel



I apply a  
bitmap rasterization  
filter



I cut  
bold shapes



it's almost  
a collage technic

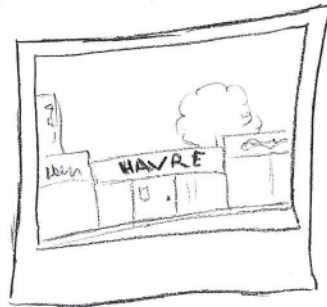
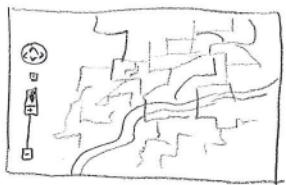
## Appropriating Vernacular Signs

I reappropriate  
existing and  
accessible elements



© Frédéric Teschner

I extracted and  
reinvented them  
in a camouflage



I had found  
a vernacular sign  
with deformed  
letters.

I empty it  
and turned it  
into an abstract sign

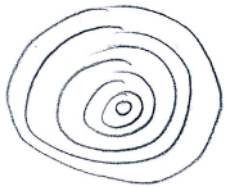


## Iterating on a Previous Logo

this is the previous logo  
I find it flat  
and poor

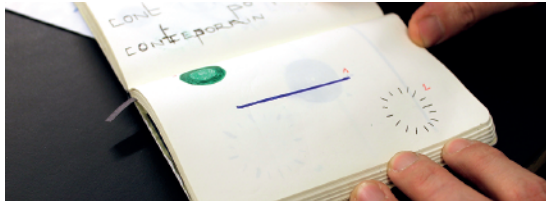
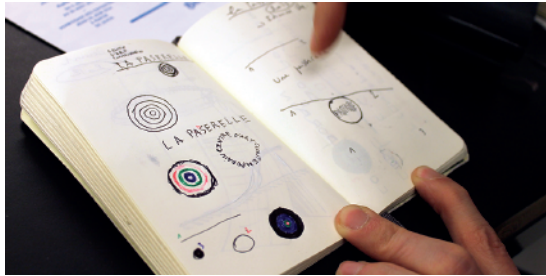


but we  
wanted to  
save a trace  
of it.



so it became  
a volume.

↳ but it looked  
like a dartboard



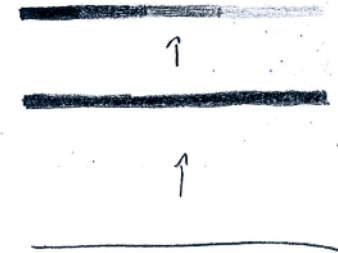
© Frédéric Teschner

then it  
became a planet.



I also had the  
idea of a bar

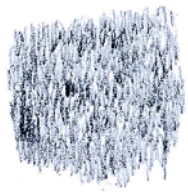
when my elements  
were defined on paper,  
I started over  
on the computer



# The Evolving Mascot

I didn't want  
a too automatic  
identity.

so this planet is  
more a mascot  
than a logo.



a poster  
side to  
be glued

I reused my  
favourite texture,



© Frédéric Teschner

but the  
next one  
is going to be  
normal again,  
or else it  
would become  
boring



last time  
is was melting.



then we added  
some rings.



first I just changed  
its color.

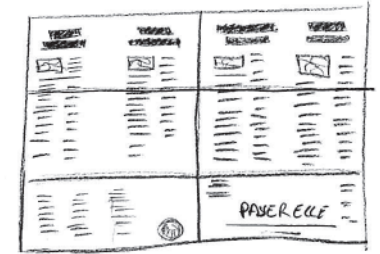


"I first need to establish my principles over several specimen before I can override them."

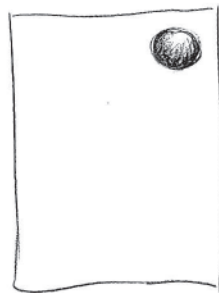
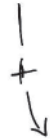
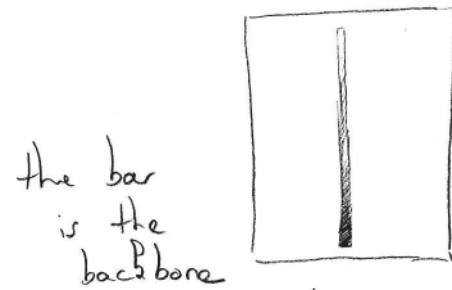
# Rhythmic Rules For Evolving Posters



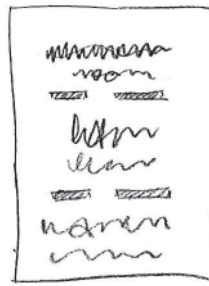
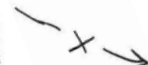
© Frédéric Teschner



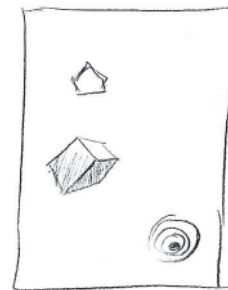
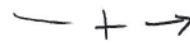
notes



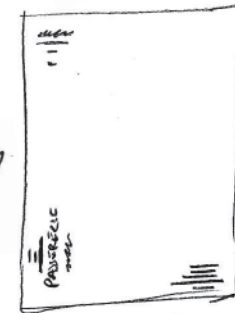
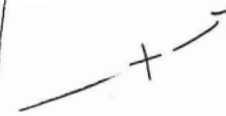
the planet is  
the mascot



dividers,  
and artists' names



glimpses  
of the artists



information

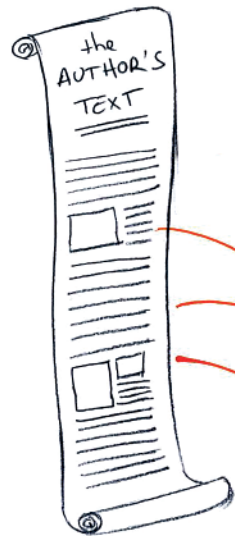


P7

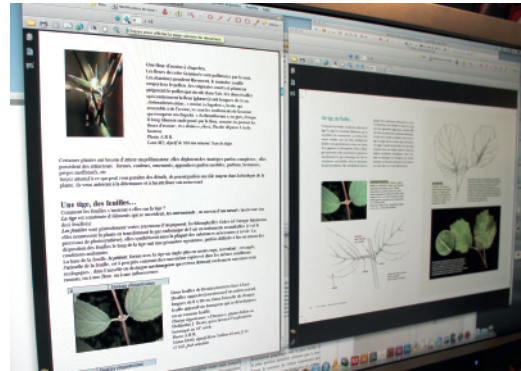
## Establishing Visual Masses before Readapting the Layout

"the editor  
just gives me  
a few pages."

At some point,  
the master  
stops changing.

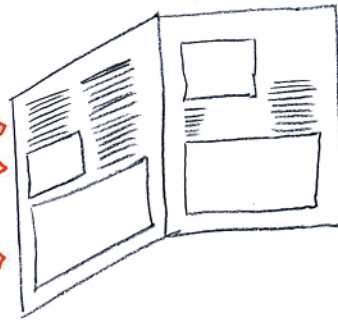


I create  
a principle.  
I position  
visual masses.

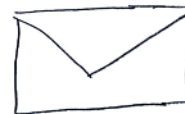


© Marie-Astrid Bailly-Maitre

I readapt  
the layout  
to the final  
picture



I indicate  
the changes  
I want to  
the photo-engraver



"the person who is going to do the layout must not have any question"

We test every case, the shortest and the longest verb.

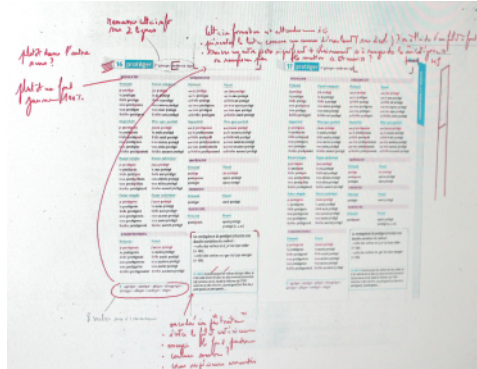
DO  
mm  
mm  
mm  
mm  
mm  
mm

ABRACADABRA  
mmmmmm  
mmmmmm  
mmmmmm  
mmmmmm  
mmmmmm

but we can cheat on the longest ones by shrinking them a bit

⇒ ABRACADABRA ⇐

## Structures at Multiple Levels



© Marie-Astrid Bailly-Maitre



we create a document with all the possible cases.

every case needs to have its own style



the structure is even at the letter level

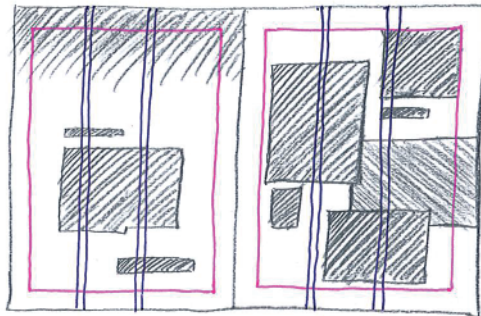
A Template is so much more  
than just a Grid

"here, nothing is aligned,  
it is organized using  
spread ambience"



"information of  
the same nature  
must have the  
same style"

© Marie-Astrid Bailly-Maître

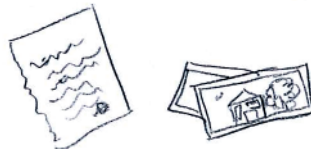


I had 4 different  
text types:

- ① Giono's citation
- ② his daughter's notes
- ③ literary text
- ④ recipe

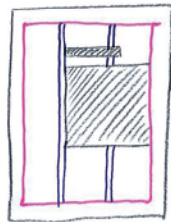
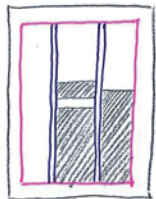
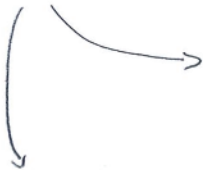
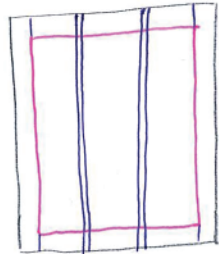
I couldn't  
cut the text

I kept receiving  
new pictures  
and texts.



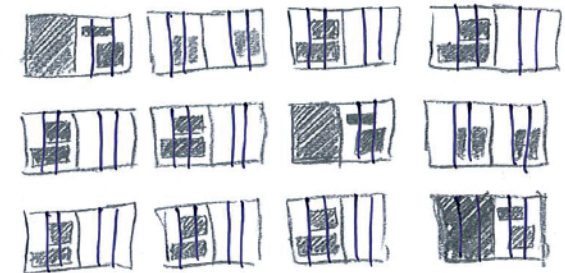
The grid  
that I can use or not

I have a system  
with 2 or 3 columns.



© Marie-Astrid Bailly-Maitre

“it creates  
a rhythm,  
thanks to  
the modular repetition”

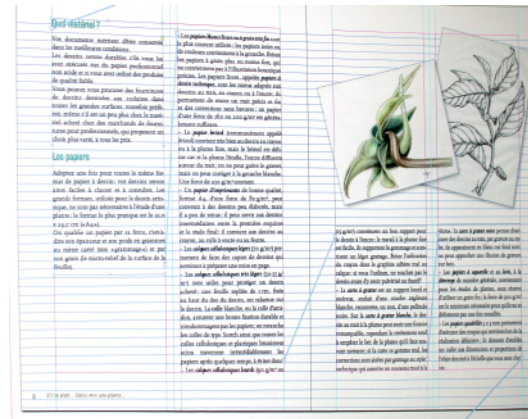


I use  
rulers and,  
depending on page type,  
I can use the  
grid or not.

“With this grid, I define  
how I'm going to structure  
the pages' space”

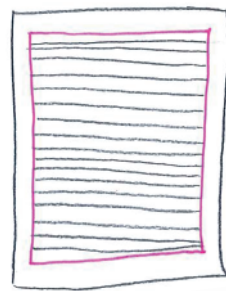
# Inconvenient Constraint

One can have grids that will impose a behavior to the text.



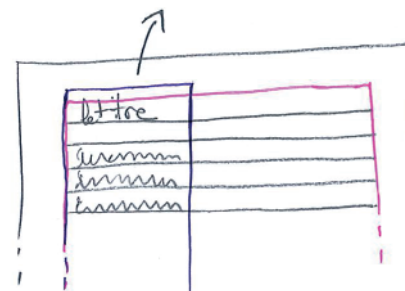
"Layout is finding solutions for every case that exists"

© Marie-Astrid Bailly-Maitre



the baseline is going to prevail and structure the text.

I have to pull the text block. otherwise the title doesn't fit

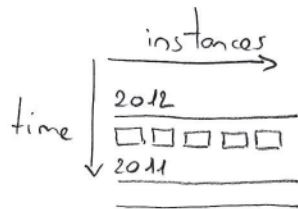


but it imposes constraints

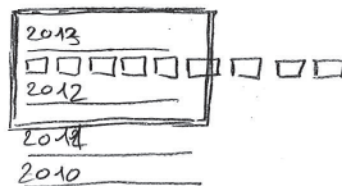
P8

## One Axis for Time

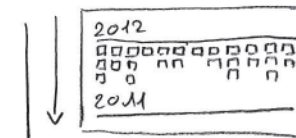
In the first version navigation was set in two dimensions



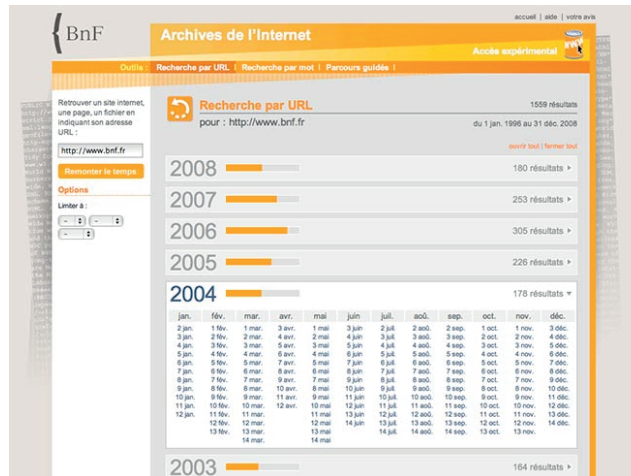
but I knew that it wouldn't work over time



so I decided to work with drawers

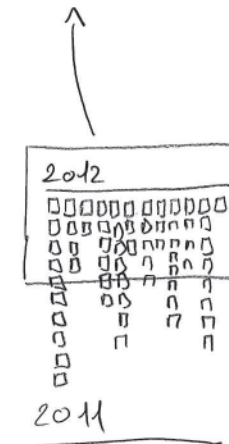
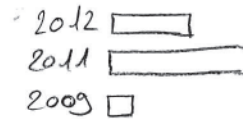


both years and instances are on one axis



© Nicolas Taffin

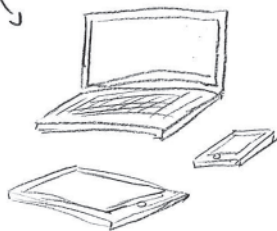
I also added a visual cue for the number of instances.



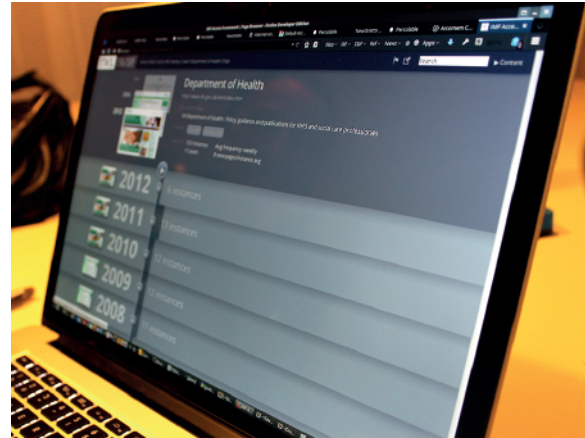
## Structures for extreme variability

on this project,  
the grid is created  
live

I had to design  
without having  
the content and  
for web variability



and device  
variability



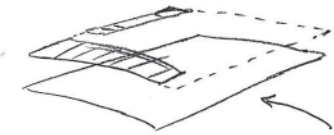
© Nicolas Taffin

so I test as much  
as I can



I spend my  
time resizing  
my frame

because it's  
impossible to get rid  
of all possible mistakes.



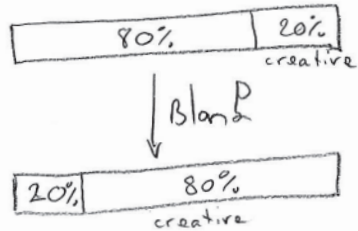
old  
webpage

and instead of  
trying to get into  
others' code,  
we just put our layer on top

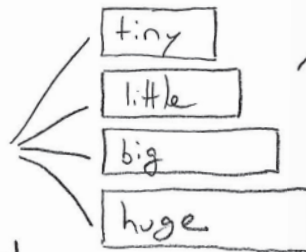
I try to break  
my layout

## Grosso-Modo Grid

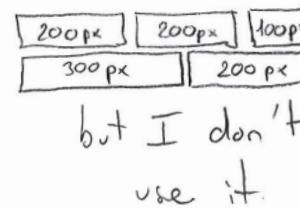
I realized that  
I was spending 80%  
of my time on doing  
the same things again and again  
and only 20% on the creative side



I created a  
system that I  
call the  
Grosso-modo Grid



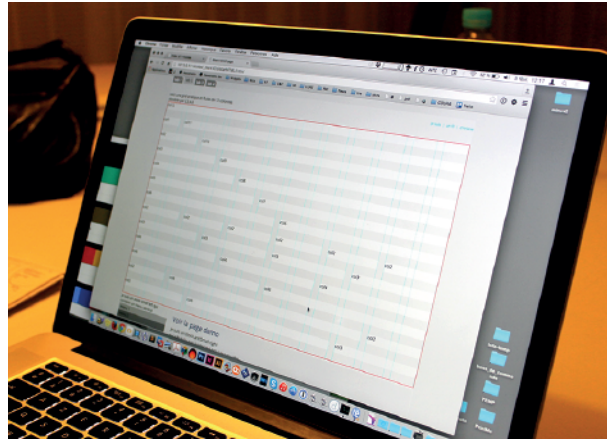
I also had  
a grid "à l'ancienne"



so I can focus  
on the creative  
part

for the menu,  
I created the  
best code

It's not semantic,  
and content & design  
must talk together

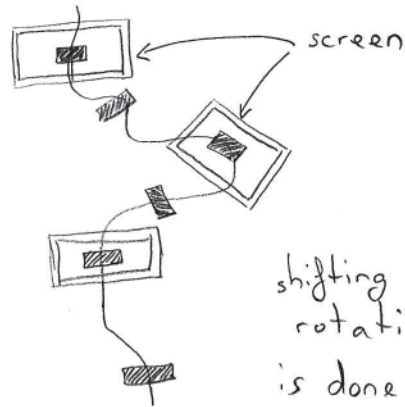


© Nicolas Taffin

P9

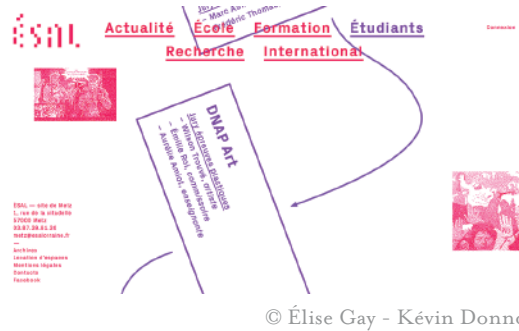
# Pseudo-Random Arrows Generating unique layouts

we twist  
habits and codes.



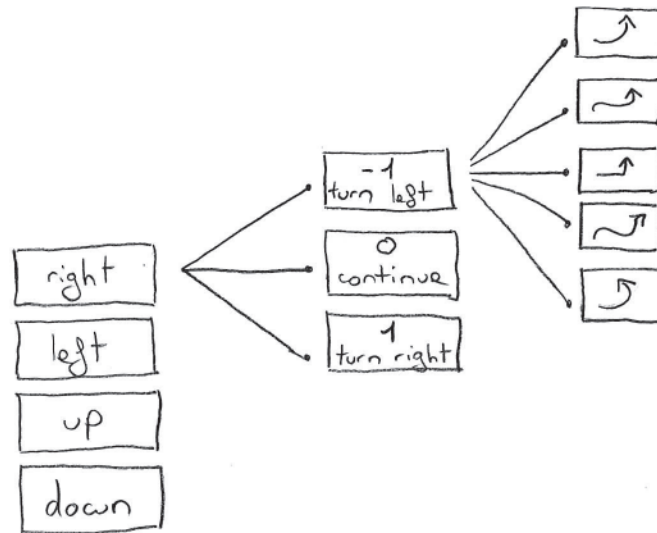
shifting and  
rotating  
is done just  
by scrolling

we created an  
"infinite" number  
of arrows:  
the layout  
is generative



© Élise Gay - Kévin Donnot

the random  
choice of the arrow  
dictates the navigation



## Reusing and Improving a Previous Principle

"as we code ourselves,  
we have direct  
feedback"



They already had  
a print identity



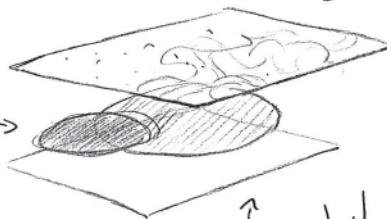
© Élise Gay - Kévin Donnot

we took

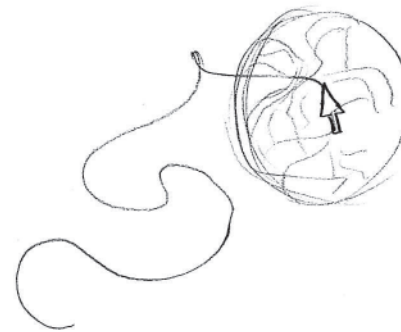
- The Typo
- monocolor  
photographs

white & transparent  
rasterized picture

blue  
circles  
moving  
with the  
cursor



white  
background



but it  
wasn't  
funny

so we added  
a second circle  
and we fiddled  
with maths  
for the circles  
to have a different  
path.

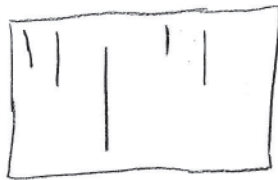
first we tried  
to just follow  
the cursor

Thin Lines turned into Arrows  
Bold Lines turned into Images

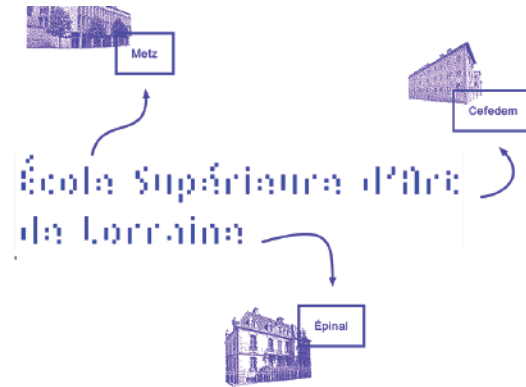
we had to create  
our visual principle  
from the logotype  
which goes from

thin to bold  
||| 5 | → |||||

we started  
to work from  
the thin version



but we had  
too many vertical  
lines



© Élise Gay - Kévin Donnot

and then  
we figured out  
that we needed  
to work from  
the bold version

so we turned  
them into  
arrows.



we decided to  
include small  
images to talk  
about the  
identity

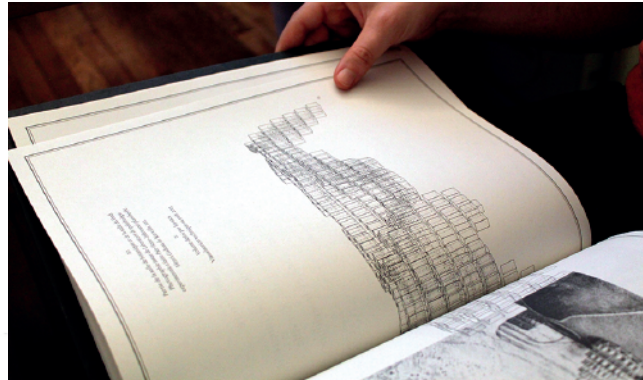


we chose them  
from the set  
they gave us



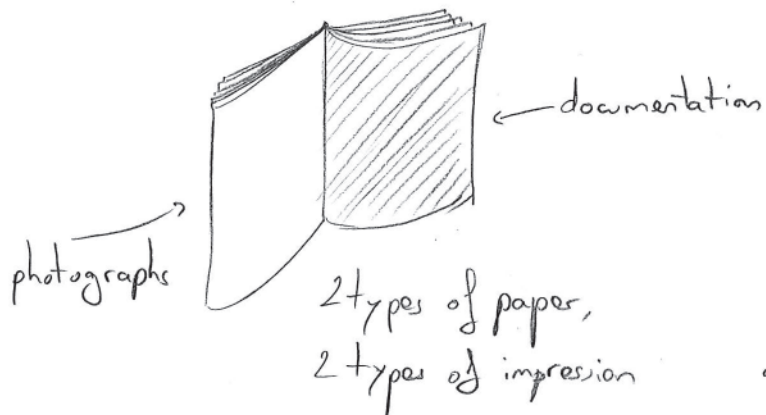
## Using Captions as a fixed Grid

"the grid is not  
a principle, a grid  
cannot replace a good idea,"



© Élise Gay - Kévin Donnot

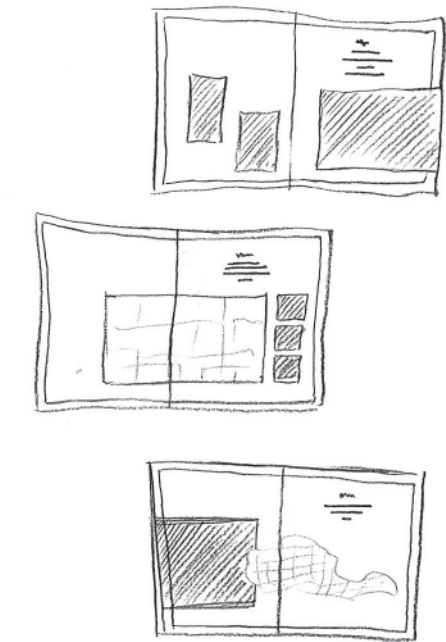
we create  
the rhythm  
of the book.



always centered



what we use as  
a grid are the captions

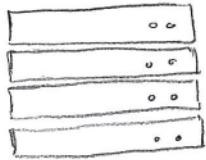


and then we  
can move around  
the images without  
losing the reader

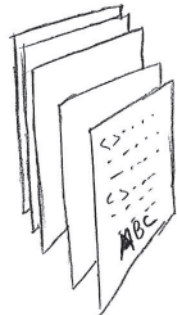
P<sub>IO</sub>

## Automatic Filling

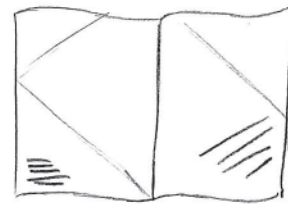
For this book,  
the content was  
reused from  
the website



content would  
automatically flow  
from the database  
to the book  
through styles.



predefined  
styles.



texts directly  
flowed into  
the grid.



© Benoît Santiard

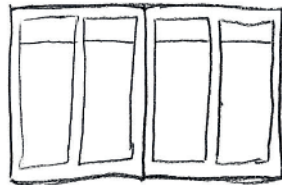
this way, I could focus  
on the most interesting  
part of the work:

- choosing pictures,
- making sure that  
every detail was correct
- create the cover page

We had 864 pages  
and only 1 month and a half  
to create the layout

so we had  
to find solutions.

3 types of content



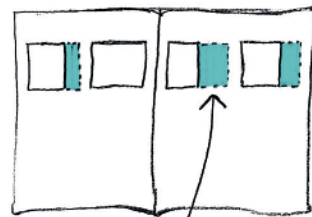
we created a very simple  
grid with two buildings  
per pages.

"Au cas par cas"

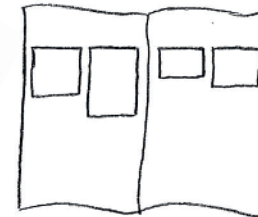


© Benoît Santiard

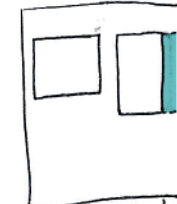
in the beginning  
we wanted to have  
all pictures at the same size



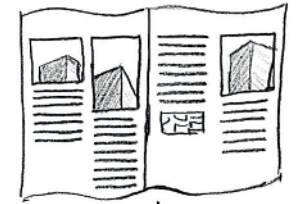
but there was  
too much white  
space



we have  
to look at  
the extremes:  
→ the biggest  
→ the smallest



add white  
space

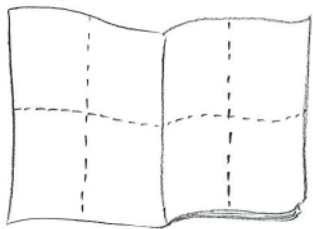


spread on a  
second column

we decided  
to adapt the layout  
and the master  
to the extreme  
cases

# Defining the Master before the Content

the master  
is predefined but  
we don't have  
the content yet



cut in half  
horizontally and  
vertically

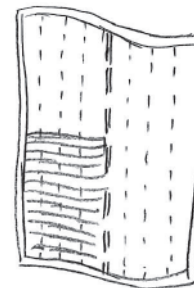
easy to discuss  
with the editor  
and to develop

each square can  
host 1500 characters



© Benoît Santiard

For this project,  
I created 10 versions  
of the file to experiment  
with the grid



now there are 8 columns  
and a text column spreads  
over 4 of them.

I try to have round  
numbers because  
it's easier to use

# Establishing a Collection Principle with Variants & Invariants

to establish  
a collection principle  
we have both

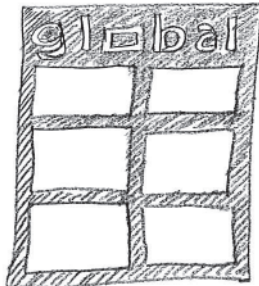
variants	invariants
color	book format
illustrator	paper
...	grid



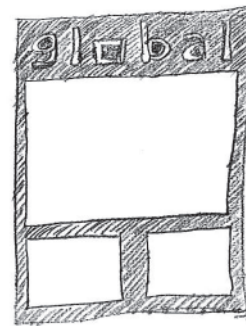
© Benoit Santiard

"as time flies,  
we take more  
freedom with  
the grid,"

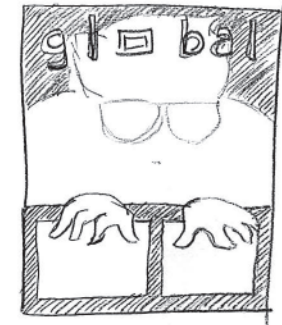
the cover is divided  
into eight screens



the first cover  
didn't have  
enough  
impact



for the 4th,  
we broke up  
the grid



"simple but rich  
enough to add  
complexity,"

so we used  
4 screens to  
show a photograph

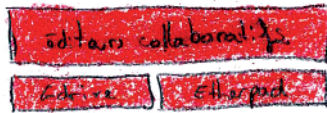
Pii

## Parent-Children relationship

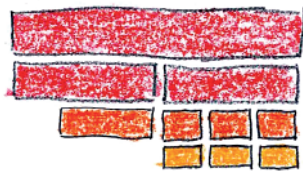
at first, we just had a crappy grid sketch in a notebook



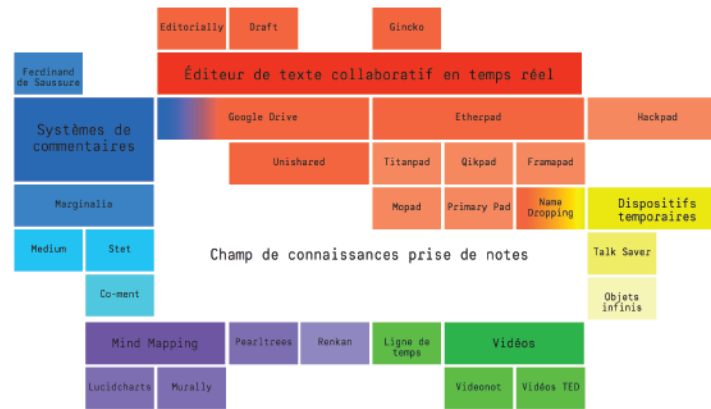
we started with the two principal tools.



and we added their "children" below



relationships are expressed through the organization



© Sarah Garcin

we also had to find ways to avoid creating unwanted links.



not connected even though they are close

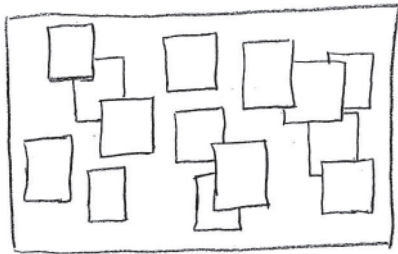
"As we were placing things on this website, we were able to look for tools to fill the holes,"

## Constraining Projects in Frames based on their Country

it is both a  
state of the art  
and a working tool



we wanted to have  
all the projects on one  
single screen  
it was a huge constraint.



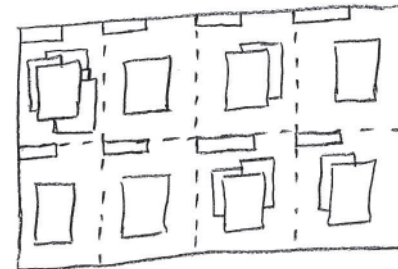
at first they  
were randomly  
set in the space

how to  
classify them?

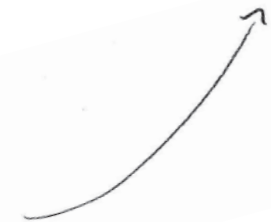


© Sarah Garcin

now each country  
has a frame and  
the projects are  
constrained by it.

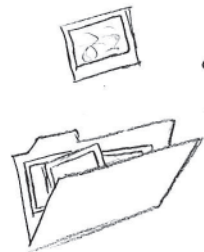


by presenting them  
this way, we discovered  
that the Netherlands  
had a lot of  
projects.



# La Mixette : Creating Dynamic Posters

We had to produce  
hundreds of different  
posters during an event

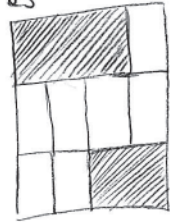


a live feed  
of documents  
is stored in  
several folders.



© Sarah Garcin

when the picture  
is bigger than the  
square, it spans over  
two squares



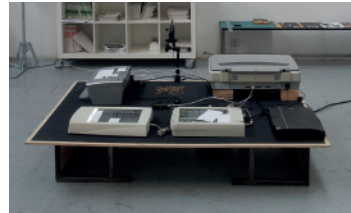
We used a "mixette".  
Each slider spans  
through a folder



each square of  
the grid corresponds  
to a folder

We had to produce  
hundreds of different  
posters during an event

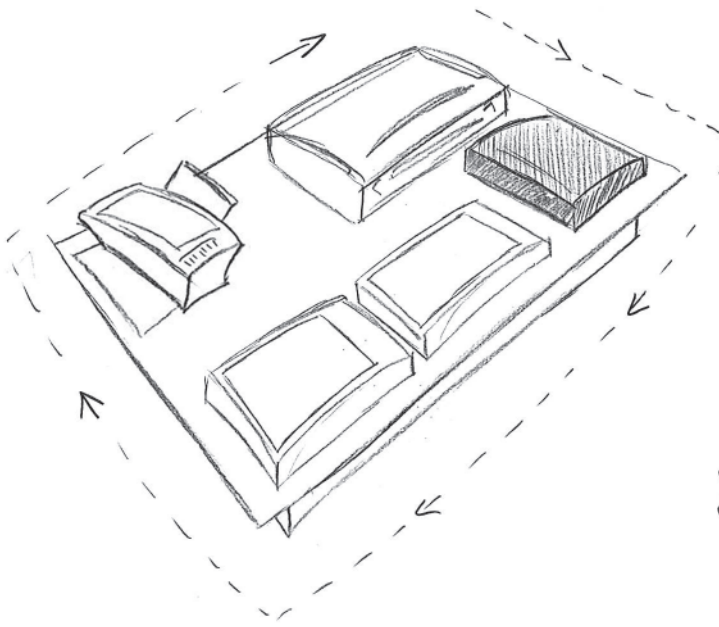
Layout based on Printers  
Spatial Positionning



© Sarah Garcin

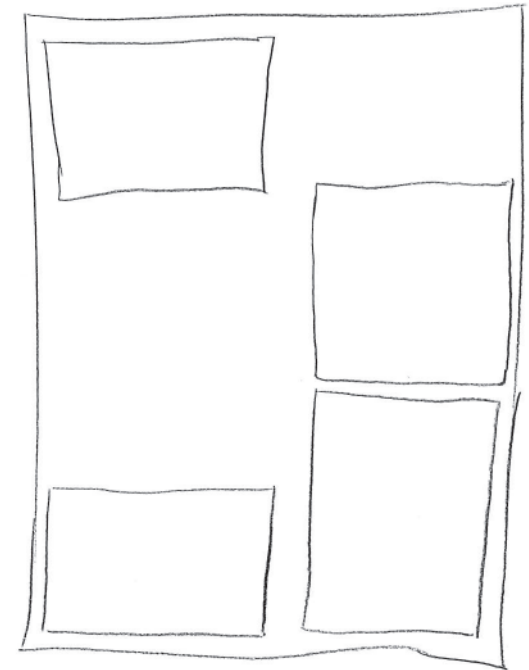


a path is created  
using scanners



the layout  
follows the scanners'  
positions on the table

it's flexible enough  
to generate diversity.



**ÉTAT CIVIL**

Nom  Prénom

Né le :

Jour : 1 Mois : Janvier Année : 1990

en : Roumets

Âge :  ans

**ADRESSE DE DOMICILIATION**

Adresse :

Code Postal :  Ville :

Téléphone :

Vit en France depuis : 2013

☐ Permis B

☐ Permis C

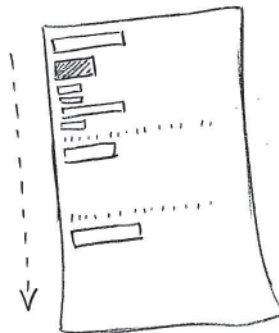
**OBJECTIFS**

☐ Prendre des cours pour apprendre à

- parler français
- lire et écrire le français

We created a template using the `pdf` library and a form.

information  
go to specific  
places.

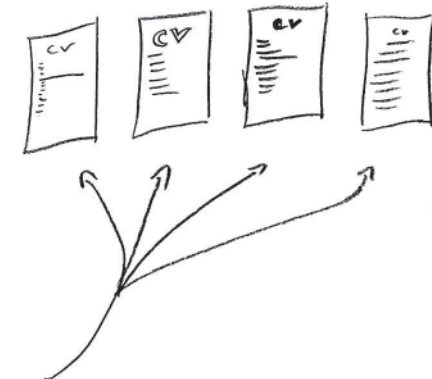


blocks go  
one below  
the other

we used  
the constraints  
from the tool  
and didn't go  
↗ beyond

we chose the  
font-size to  
ensure a one-page  
format

we generate  
many examples.  
to test it,,



PI2

## Creating a Map and a Storyboard from a Client Brief

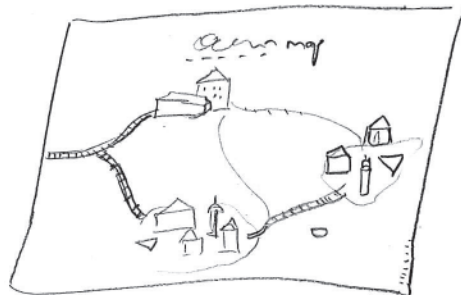
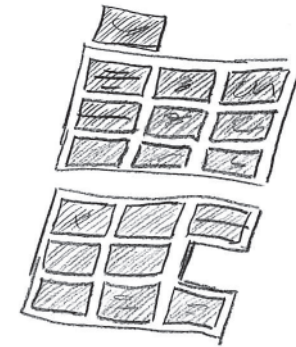
we had received a  
brief

we selected  
only the interesting  
parts

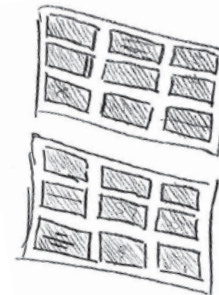


© Studio Hyphen

but we realized  
that one of the panels  
should better go first.

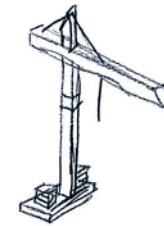
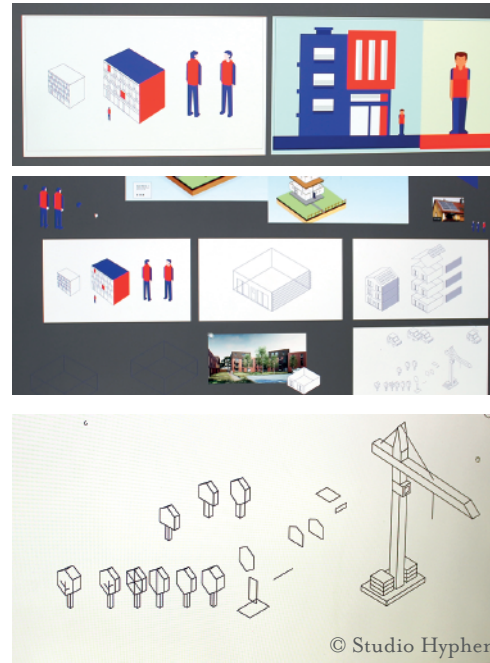
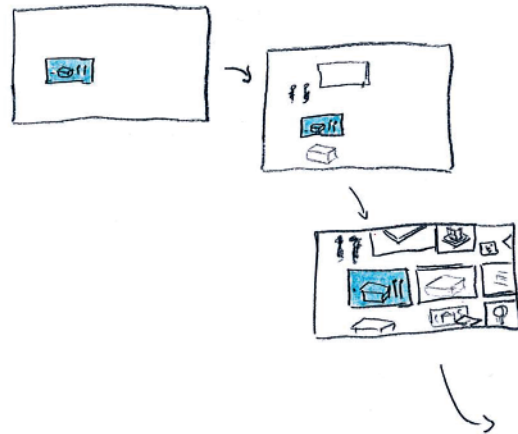
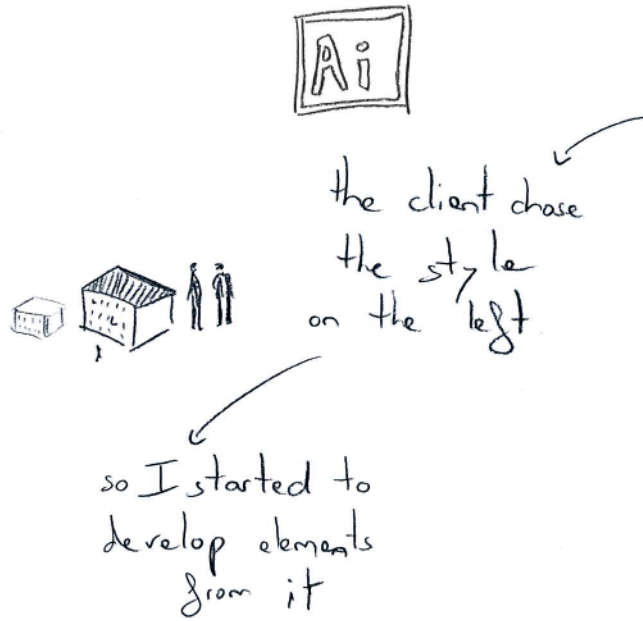


we created  
a map out  
of it.



and then  
we turn it into  
a storyboard

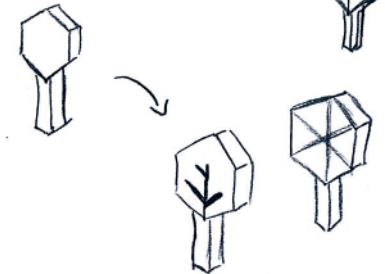
# Developing Visual Style using copy-paste and tweak



but I didn't do  
it for the crane,  
it was too complicated

I start  
from one

for example  
I created 12  
trees and then  
asked HA to help  
me choose among  
them



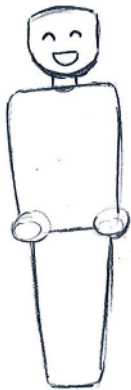
I copy-paste  
a previous one  
and modify it.

## Creating a System for Developing Coherent Characters

we have to  
create systems  
to save some time



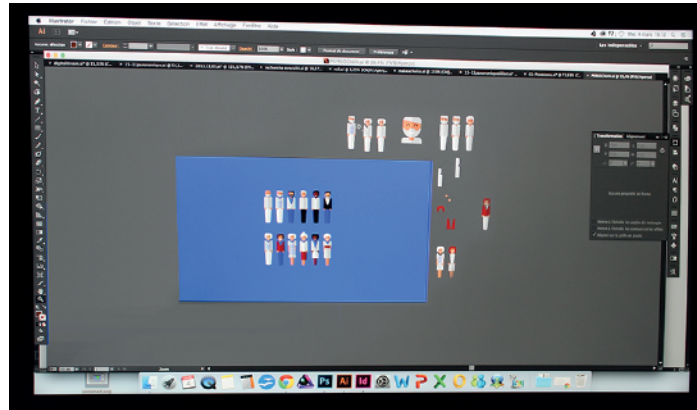
for example  
for the characters,  
we had a sort of  
base



it can be  
developed  
and combined  
easily



I try a lot  
of different possibilities.



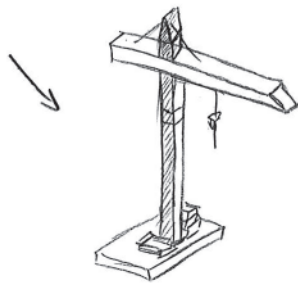
© Studio Hyphen

I use the  
outer space.  
I don't want  
to delete them



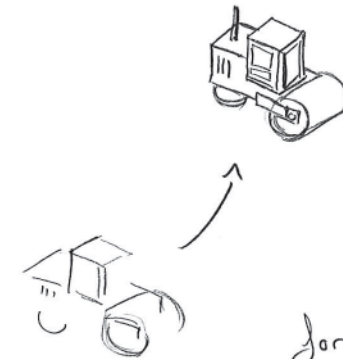
## Creating and Reusing an Animation Principle

I like to explore  
different ways of animating  
the crane



© Studio Hyphen

but I have  
to do it by hand.



for example  
this tractor.

then I can  
apply the same  
principle to  
objects of the  
same kind

I decided  
to use the construction line