Data as Art

The art of data collection, visualization, and sonification

Kelsey Brod, Computational Media, Arts and Cultures PhD Candidate, Duke University, Feb. 8 2024

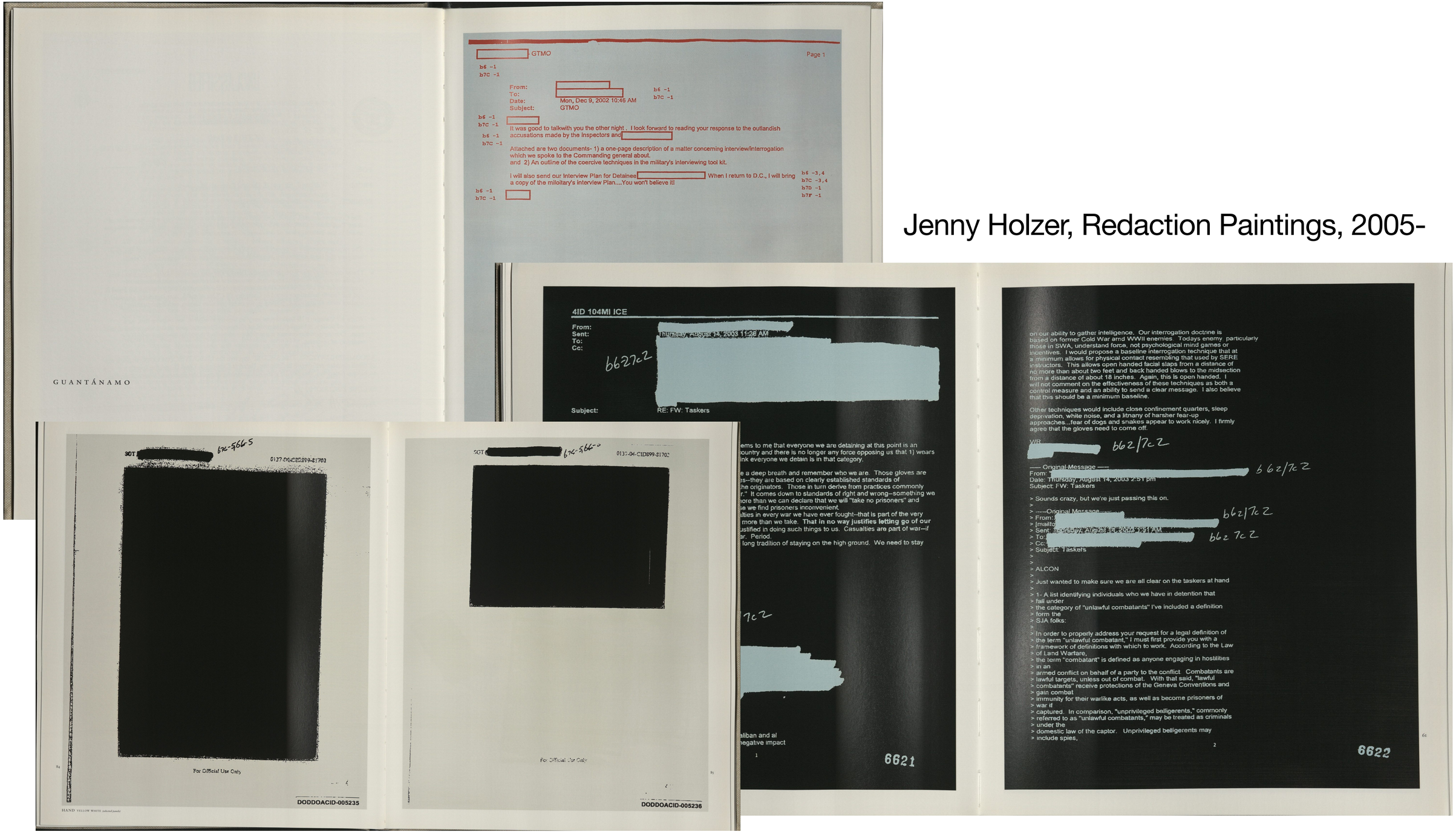
Reminders

- Hi, I'm Kelsey Brod, Computational Media, Arts and Cultures (CMAC) PhD Candidate here at Duke.
- Project Lead TA
- Reminders: HW1 regrade requests are due by Sunday, project proposals need to be updated from peer review feedback by Friday at 5pm, and HW2 is due Tuesday at 5pm
  - (This lecture material is not a test nor will it be a part of grading… but hopefully it will get you thinking about the "art" of data)

What my job has taught me over the years is that to really understand data and their true potential, sometimes we actually have to forget about them and see through them instead. Because data are just a tool we use to represent reality. They're always just a placeholder for something else, but they are never the real thing.

Giorgia Lupi, "How we can find ourselves in data," TED Talk (2017)

Jenny Holzer, Redaction Paintings, 2005-



GUANTÁNAMO

GTMO

Page 1

b6 -1
b7C -1

From:
To:
Date: Mon, Dec 9, 2002 10:46 AM
Subject: GTMO

b6 -1
b7C -1

It was good to talkwith you the other night . I look forward to reading your response to the outlandish accusations made by the Inspectors and

Attached are two documents- 1) a one-page description of a matter concerning interview/interrogation which we spoke to the Commanding general about.
and 2) An outline of the coercive techniques in the military's interviewing tool kit.

I will also send our Interview Plan for Detainee When I return to D.C., I will bring a copy of the miloitary's interview Plan....You won't believe it!

b6 -3,4
b7C -3,4
b7D -1
b7F -1

4ID 104MI ICE

From:
Sent: Thursday, August 14, 2003 11:26 AM
To:
Cc:

6627c2

Subject: RE: FW: Taskers

ems to me that everyone we are detaining at this point is an
country and there is no longer any force opposing us that 1) wears
ink everyone we detain is in that category.

e a deep breath and remember who we are. Those gloves are
es--they are based on clearly established standards of
he originators. Those in turn derive from practices commonly
r." It comes down to standards of right and wrong--something we
ore than we can declare that we will "take no prisoners" and
e we find prisoners inconvenient.
ities in every war we have ever fought--that is part of the very
more than we take. That in no way justifies letting go of our
stified in doing such things to us. Casualties are part of war--if
r. Period.
long tradition of staying on the high ground. We need to stay

7c2

aliban and al
egative impact

1

6621

on our ability to gather intelligence. Our interrogation doctrine is based on former Cold War amd WWII enemies. Todays enemy particularly those in SWA, understand force, not psychological mind games or incentives. I would propose a baseline interrogation technique that at a minimum allows for physical contact resembling that used by SERE instructors. This allows open handed facial slaps from a distance of no more than about two feet and back handed blows to the midsection from a distance of about 18 inches. Again, this is open handed. I will not comment on the effectiveness of these techniques as both a control measure and an ability to send a clear message. I also believe that this should be a minimum baseline.

Other techniques would include close confinement quarters, sleep deprivation, white noise, and a litnany of harsher fear-up approaches...fear of dogs and snakes appear to work nicely. I firmly agree that the gloves need to come off.

V/R

662/7c2

662/7c2

---- Original Message ----
From:
Date: Thursday, August 14, 2003 2:51 pm
Subject: FW: Taskers

> Sounds crazy, but we're just passing this on.
>
> ----Original Message----
> From:
> [mailto:
> Sent:
> To:
> Cc:
> Subject: Taskers
>
>
> ALCON
>
> Just wanted to make sure we are all clear on the taskers at hand
>
> 1- A list identifying individuals who we have in detention that
> fall under
> the category of "unlawful combatants" I've included a definition
> form the
> SJA folks:
>
> In order to properly address your request for a legal definition of
> the term "unlawful combatant," I must first provide you with a
> framework of definitions with which to work. According to the Law
> of Land Warfare,
> the term "combatant" is defined as anyone engaging in hostilities
> in an
> armed conflict on behalf of a party to the conflict Combatants are
> lawful targets, unless out of combat. With that said, "lawful
> combatants" receive protections of the Geneva Conventions and
> gain combat
> immunity for their warlike acts, as well as become prisoners of
> war if
> captured. In comparison, "unprivileged belligerents," commonly
> referred to as "unlawful combatants," may be treated as criminals
> under the
> domestic law of the captor. Unprivileged belligerents may
> include spies,

2

6622

SGT 672-5665

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For Official Use Only

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HAND YELLOW WHITE (selected panels)

SGT 672-5665

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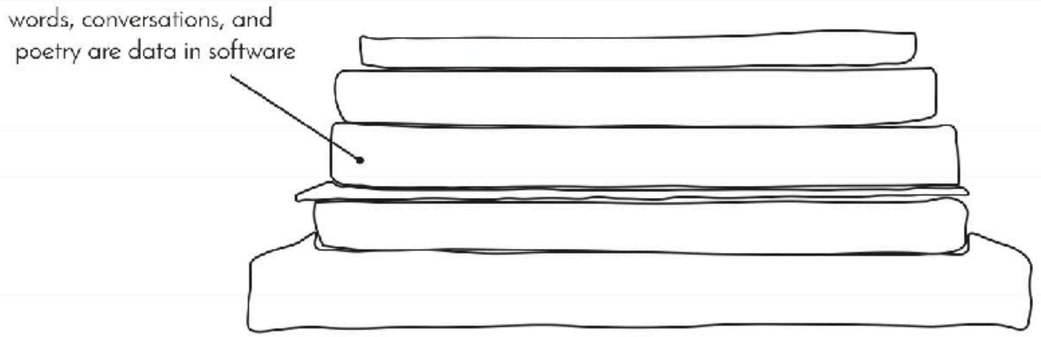
Questions for today

- What is data?
- How is the collection, curation, and presentation of data like an art?
- How can data be used to communicate material, process, and means rather than just an end?

Data is cultural; it can be words, texts, images, sounds, and books.



Caroline Sinders, Feminist Dataset (series of workshops), 2018 -

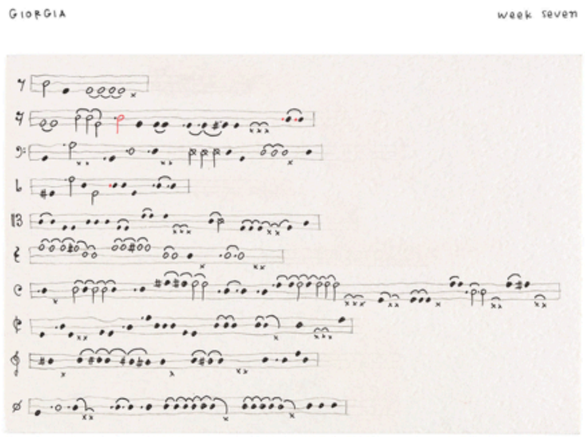
Caroline Sinders, Feminist Dataset (series of workshops), 2018 -

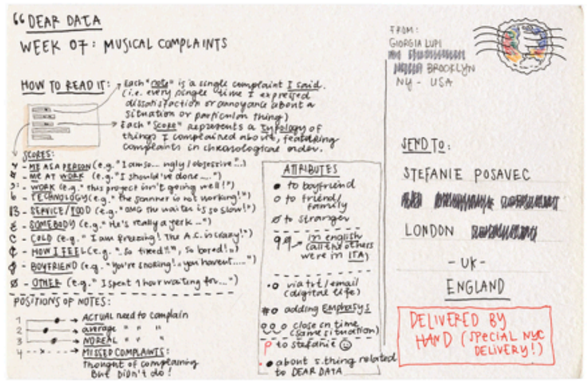
Feminist Data Set is a multi-year project that interrogates every step of the AI process that includes data collection, data labeling, data training, selecting an algorithm to use, the algorithmic model, and then designing how the model is then placed into a chat bot (and what the chatbot looks like) through intersectional feminism as an investigatory framework. Every step exists to question and analyze the pipeline of creating using machine learning–is each step feminist, is it intersectional, does each step have bias and how can that bias be removed? Really, what does it mean to think through every step slowly and thoughtfully; metaphorically, can we think of this as farm to server table, as slow data and consensual data?

Caroline Sinders

Exercise

1. Observe the room or a part of the room. Create at least 2 variables, create a classification system for the observations, and record the observations. (5-10 minutes) Note: following the sentiment of consensual data, do not classify and record people in the room.
2. What did you choose?
3. What potential problems did you run into?

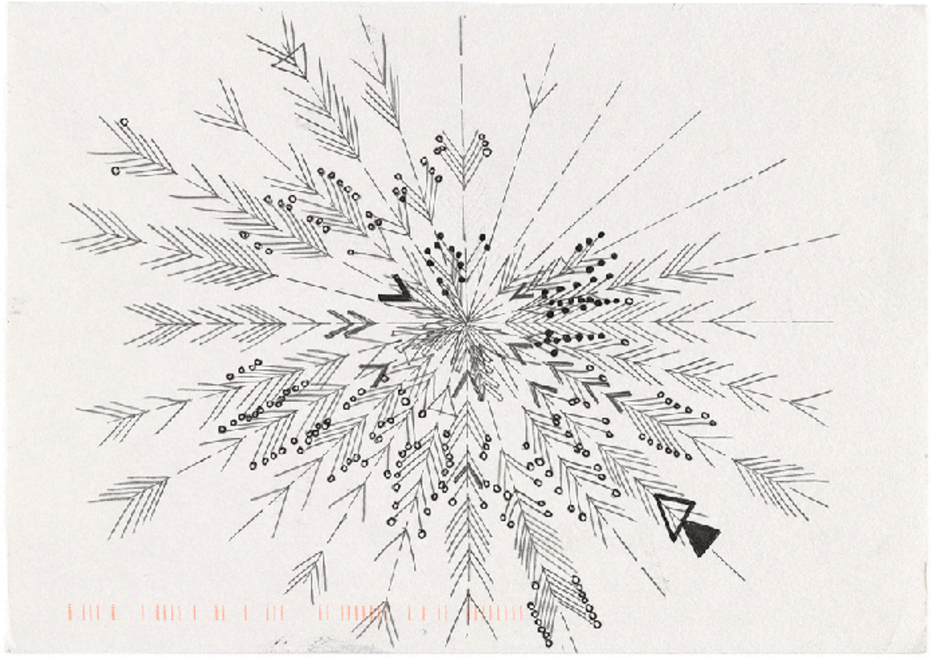


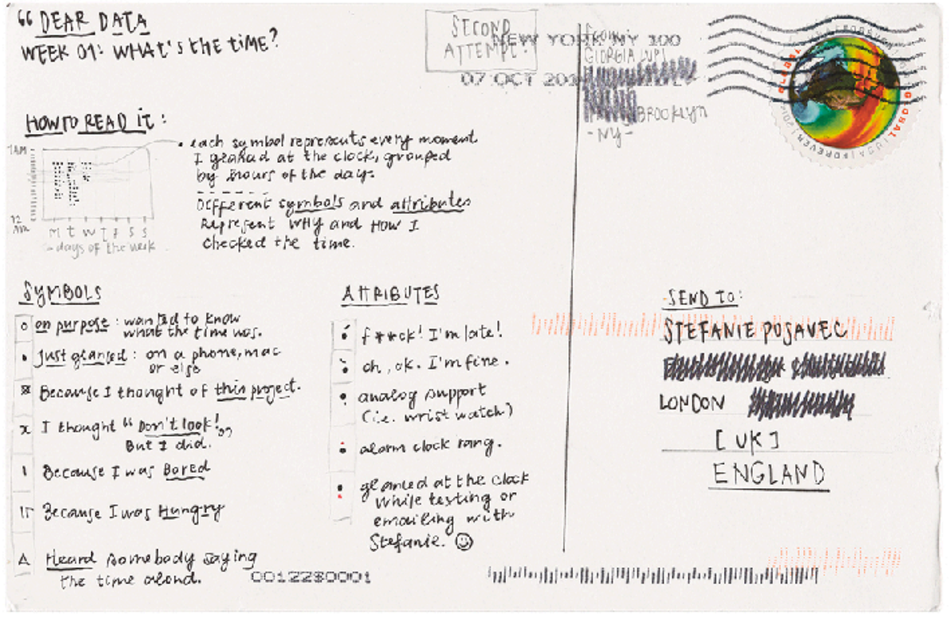


What better visual reference than a musical score to show the repetitiveness of Giorgia's protests and the "level" of complaint: whether they are justified or totally out of place.

COVER BY GIORGIA

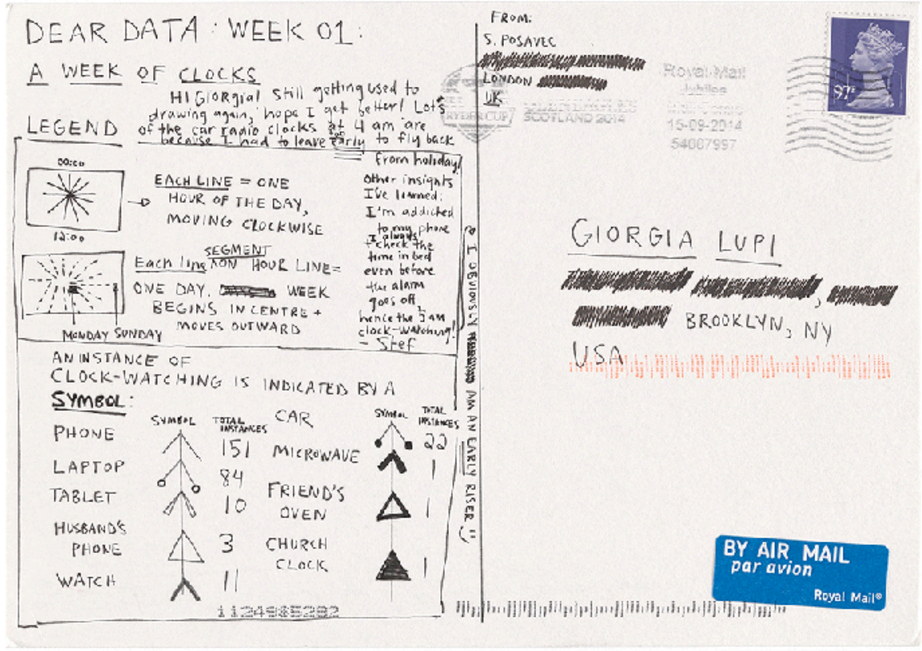
Giorgia Lupi and Stefanie Posavec, *Dear Data*, 2015





Drawing her first postcard, Giorgia had an idea for her **whole** collection: from now on every time she tracks something related to Stefanie, or to *Dear Data*, she uses a special pen to represent it!

• pink ink pen!



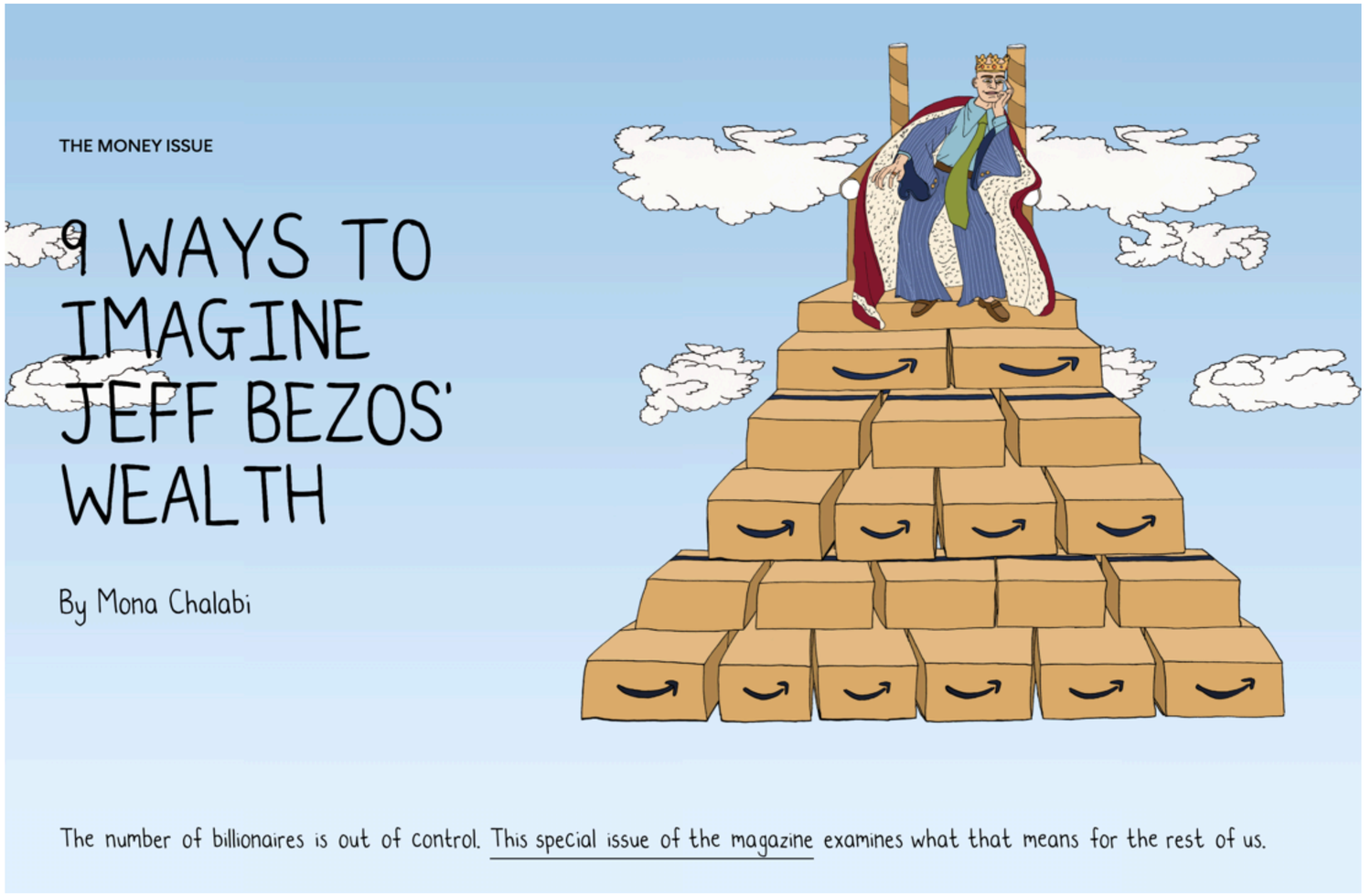
This week Giorgia and Stefanie tried gathering data in small notebooks (tedious), but soon switched to making notes on their phones (much easier). Stefanie's favourite clock to capture: a bell tolling the time in a town in Devon.

Exercise part 2

1. Think about how you will represent your data. Start to make sketches either in RStudio or by hand. (5-10 minutes)

2. How are you choosing to represent your data and why? What meaning is the aesthetic bringing to the data?

Graphing with metaphors



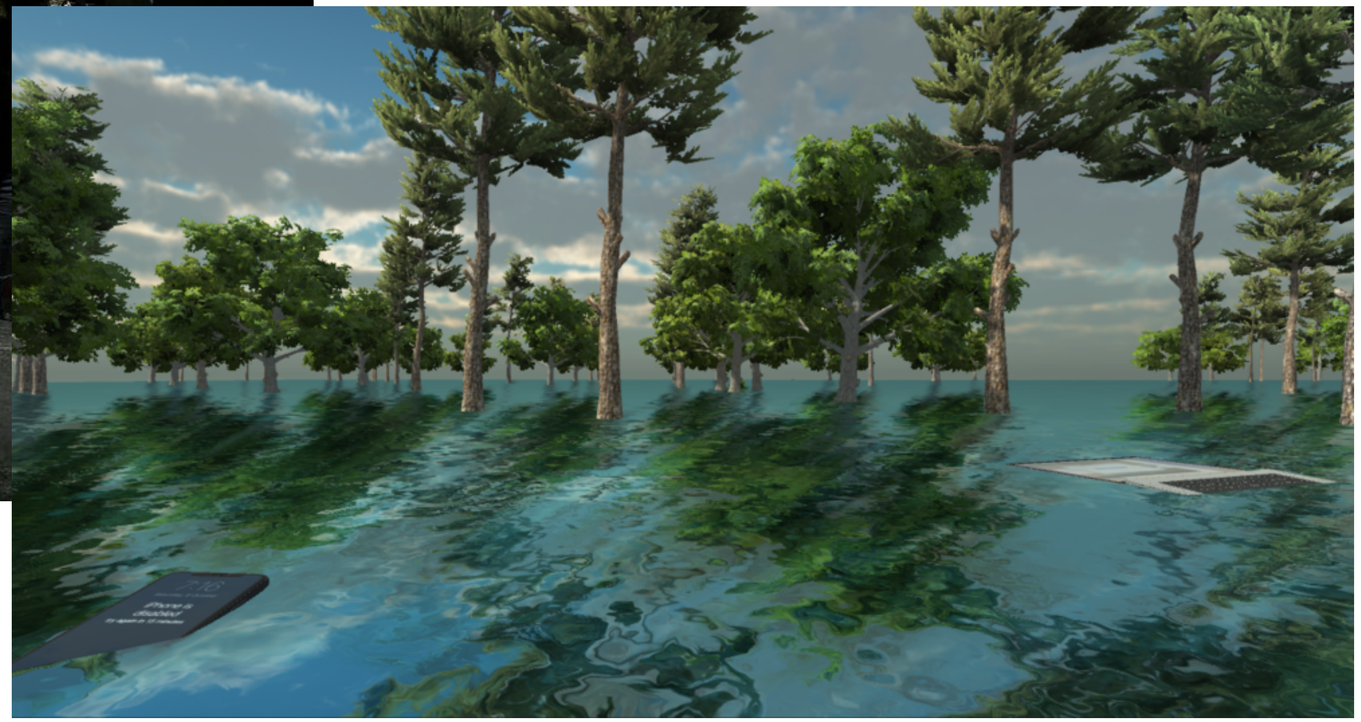
Mona Cholabi's Pulitzer Prize winning series, 9 ways to Imagine Jeff Bezos' Wealth, 2023

Exercise part 3

1. Can you visualize your data using a metaphor? (5 min)

Mark Hansen and Ben Rubin, Moveable Type, lobby installation in the NYT building, 2007

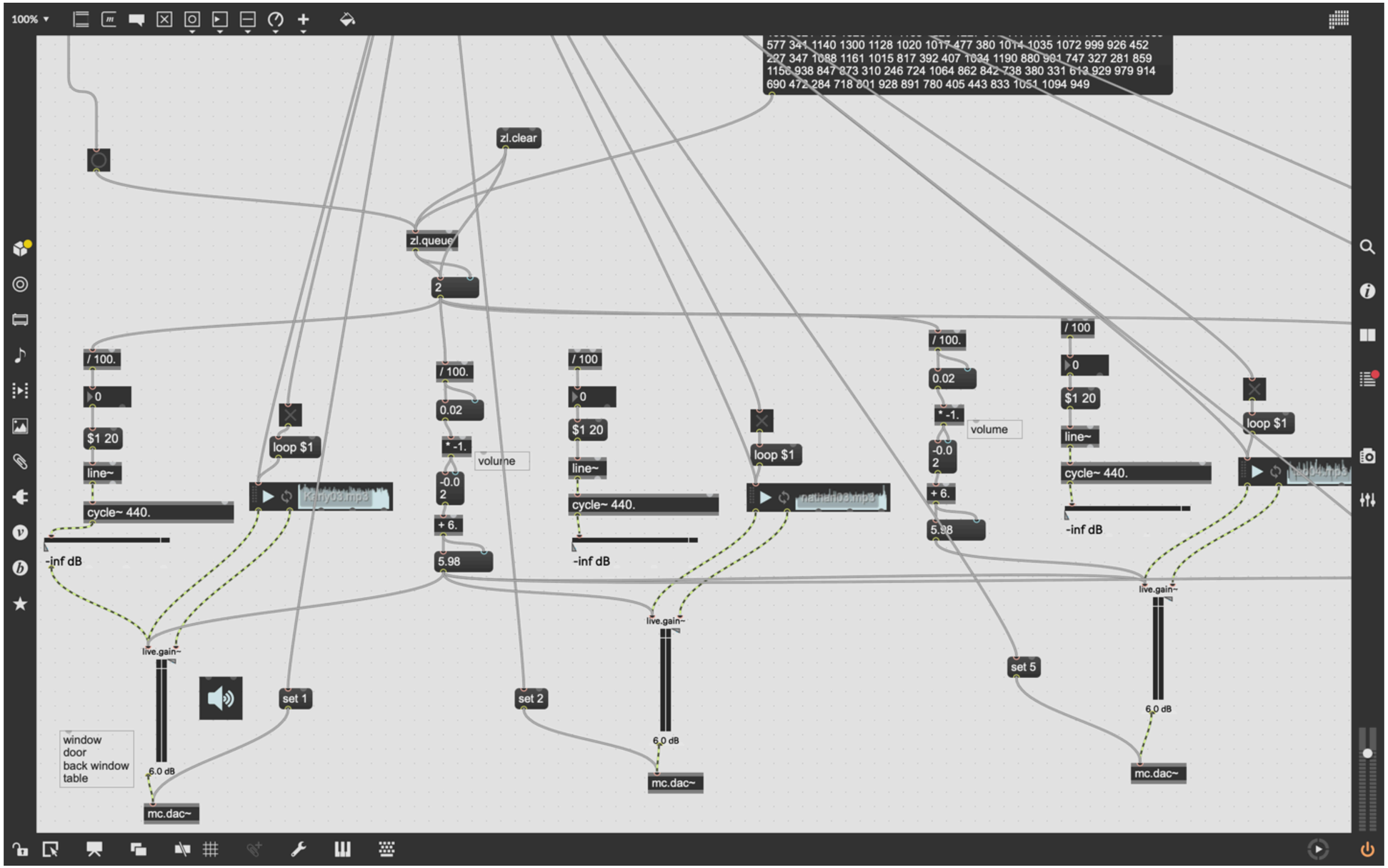
Data as world-building



Kelsey Brod, Untitled (reported North Carolina Covid-19 death increases as wind in the trees), Unity open world game, 2021.

Data as sound

Kelsey Brod, Untitled (reported North Carolina Covid-19 death increases as wind in the trees), Unity open



Kelsey Brod, Untitled (four audio channels), 2021 (image of process with software Max)

Iris data and classification