

Critical Theory

01 — Aesthetics of copyright

berenice-serra.com/teaching/2025-2026/critical-theory

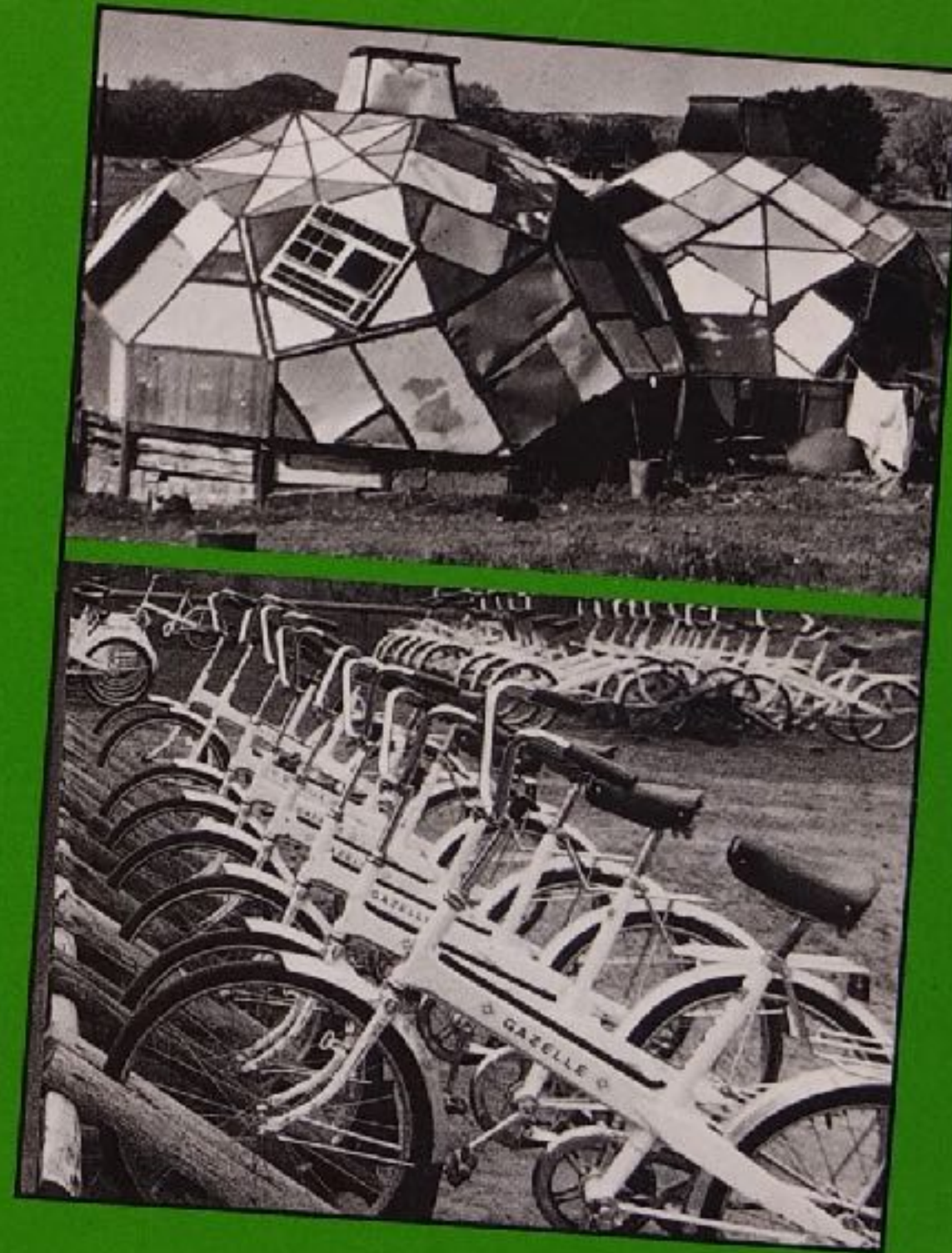
September 23, 2025

In an environment that is screwed up visually, physically, and chemically, the best and simplest thing that architects, industrial designers, planners, etc., could do for humanity would be to stop working entirely.

In all pollution, designers are implicated at least partially.

DESIGN FOR THE REAL WORLD

Human
Ecology
and
Social
Change



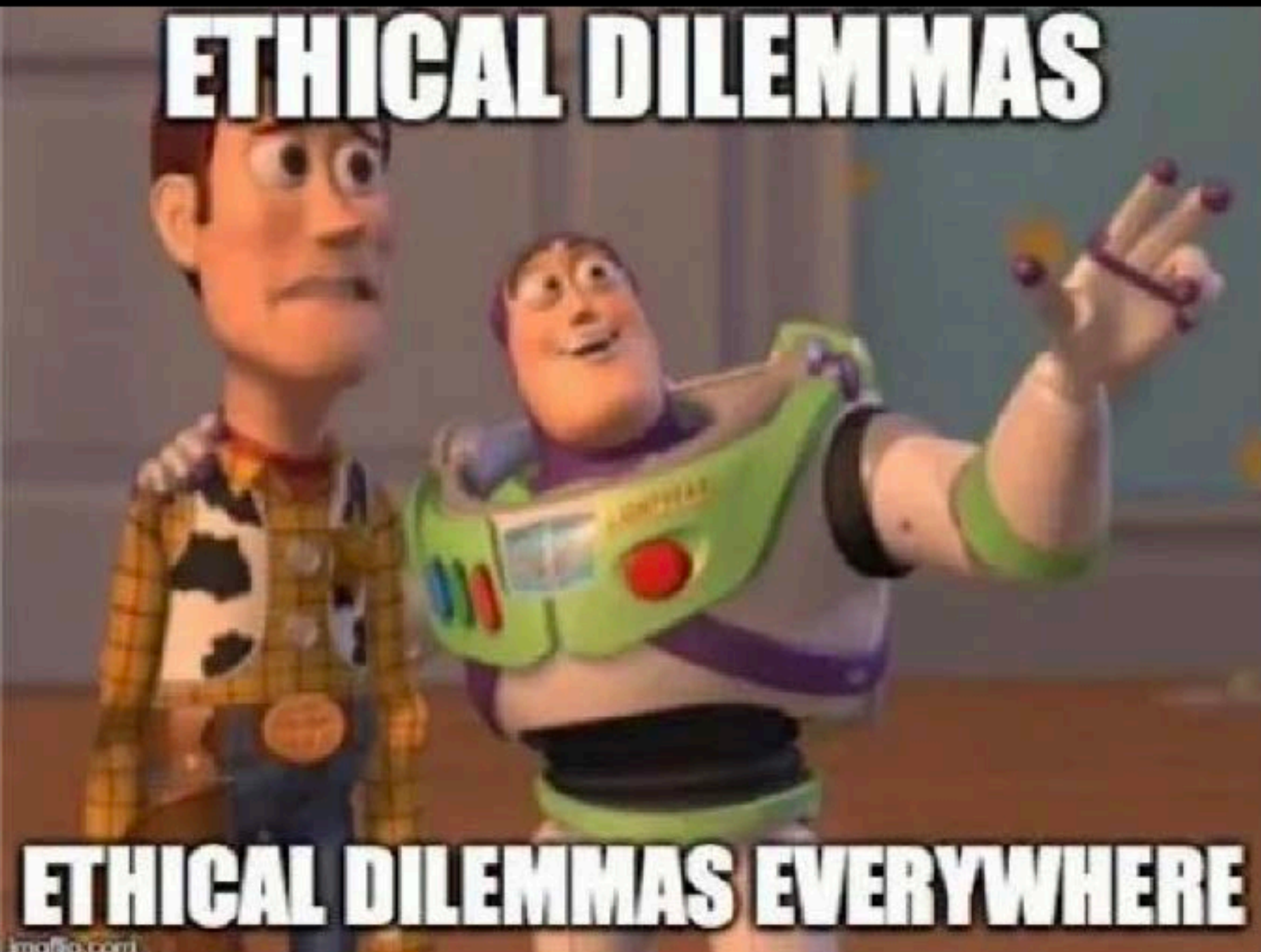
SECOND EDITION COMPLETELY REVISED

VICTOR PAPANEEK

But in this book I take a more affirmative view: It seems to me that we can go beyond not working at all, and work positively.

Design can and must become a way in which young people can participate in changing society.

ETHICAL DILEMMAS



ETHICAL DILEMMAS EVERYWHERE

imgflip.com

How do you know in which direction society should change?

Design is burdened with an ethical pressure to improve.



Do we really have any political agency through our individual design practices? Could we, instead, focus first on designers' own working conditions, targeting them as one immediate site for collective action? Could designers ever unionize?

These are some of the questions raised through a multiformat campaign that highlights the neglected dimensions of affordability, class and labor among designers who are concerned with having an 'ethical' practice.



I tried to subvert capitalism with my design practice. Now I'm looking for a job.

2.
I TRIED TO SUBVERT CAPITALISM
WITH MY DESIGN PRACTICE.
NOW I'M LOOKING FOR A JOB.

This is a small publication about the power of design, the agency of designers and their associated responsibility.

What do we, designers, do? When we say "design is everywhere" and that "design is powerful", does that necessarily translate into saying that designers are powerful? What power do we actually hold? Who is the designer who is in place to effect such things as "systemic change"? Who is the designer that can sit at the table among the other echelons of power? Who is the designer that makes the decisions, reserved for those at the top, who decide what is to be made? Do these decisions coincide with practical production (the decisions of those who are at the bottom, the tools, the designers)? Does it ever? If "practical equals greater responsibility", what is the designer's power and what is their responsibility? We've talked about, within design practice?

I tried to subvert capitalism with my design practice. Now I'm looking for a job.

What Design Can't Do



Essays on
Design and Disillusion

Silvio Lorusso

Set Margins' #26

Design is broken. Young and not-so-young designers are becoming increasingly aware of this. Many feel impotent: they were told they had the tools to make the world a better place, but instead the world takes its toll on them. Beyond a haze of hype and bold claims lies a barren land of self-doubt and impostor syndrome.

research
based
t-shirt

Digital Communication Environments

Communication Foundations

Communication & information theory

History of media, networks, and infrastructures

Digital Communication Environments

Digital Platforms and Media Creation

Typology of online social networks & identity construction

Participatory culture, user-generated content, online communities

Aesthetics of copyright, remix culture, Creative Commons

Digital Communication Environments

Digital Platforms and Media Creation

Typology of online social networks & identity construction

Participatory culture, user-generated content, online communities

Aesthetics of copyright, remix culture, Creative Commons

Digital Communication Environments

Data, Algorithms & Society

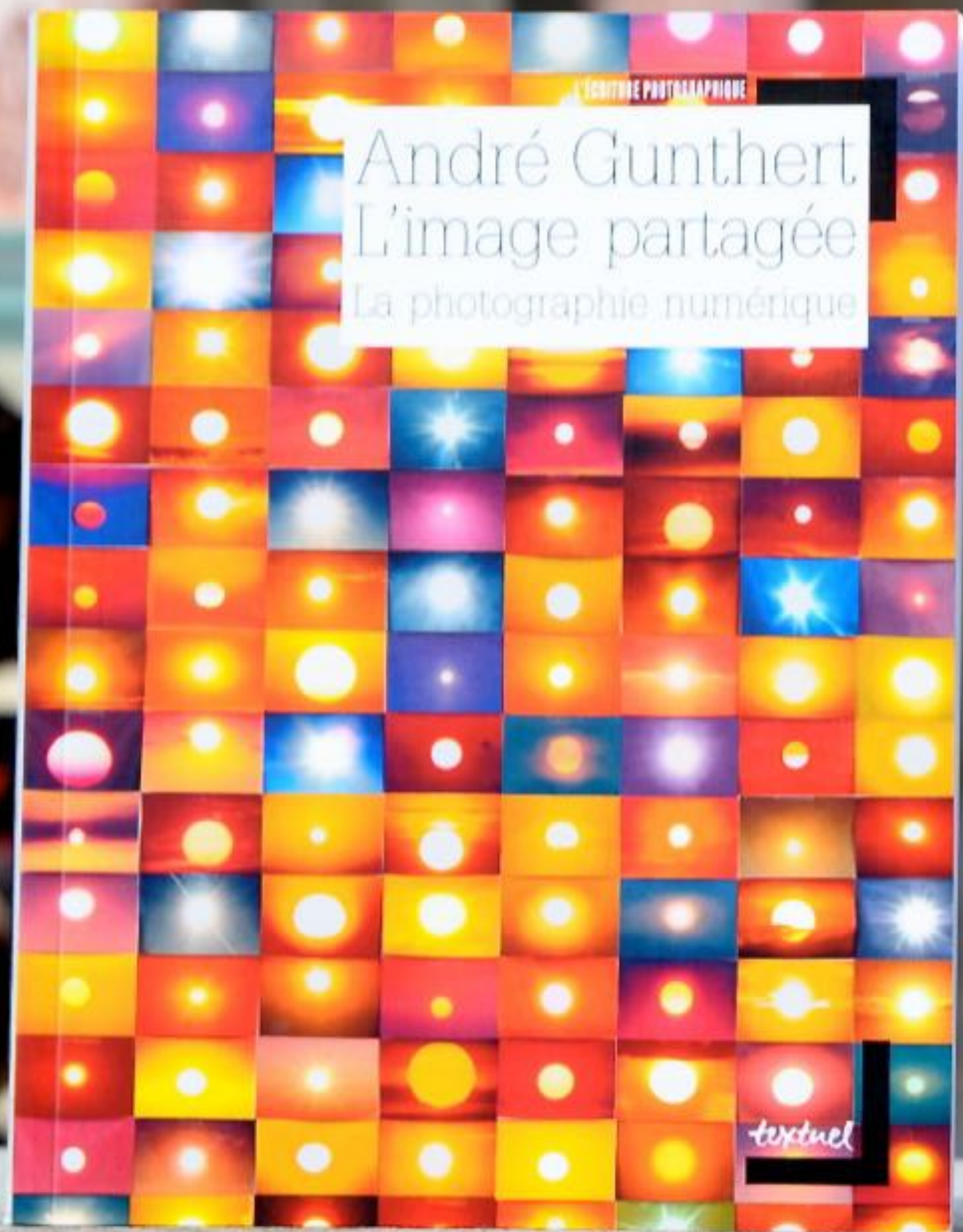
Misinformation, post-truth dynamics, and media literacy

Regulation, moderation, and digital rights

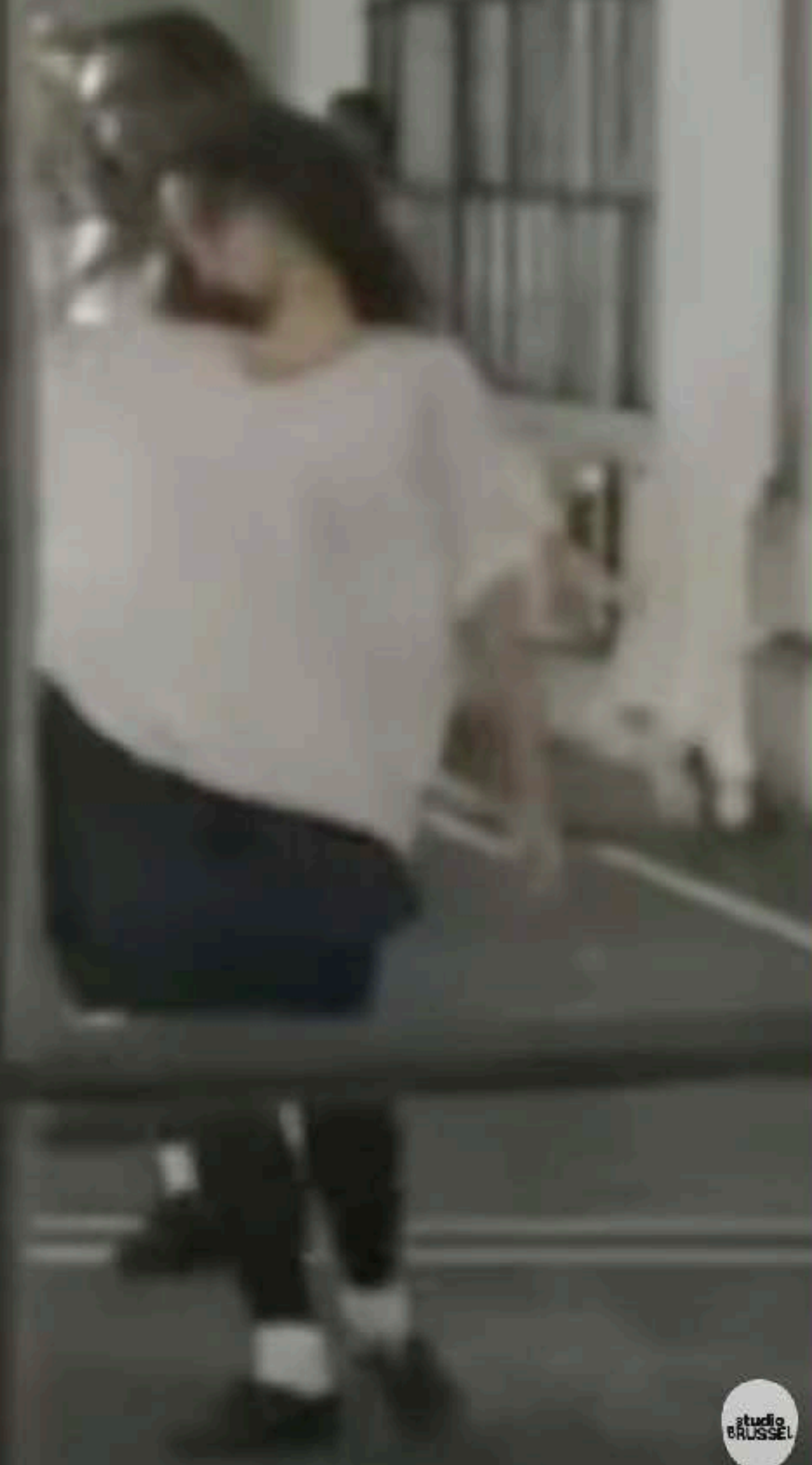
Emerging technologies and sustainable media ecologies

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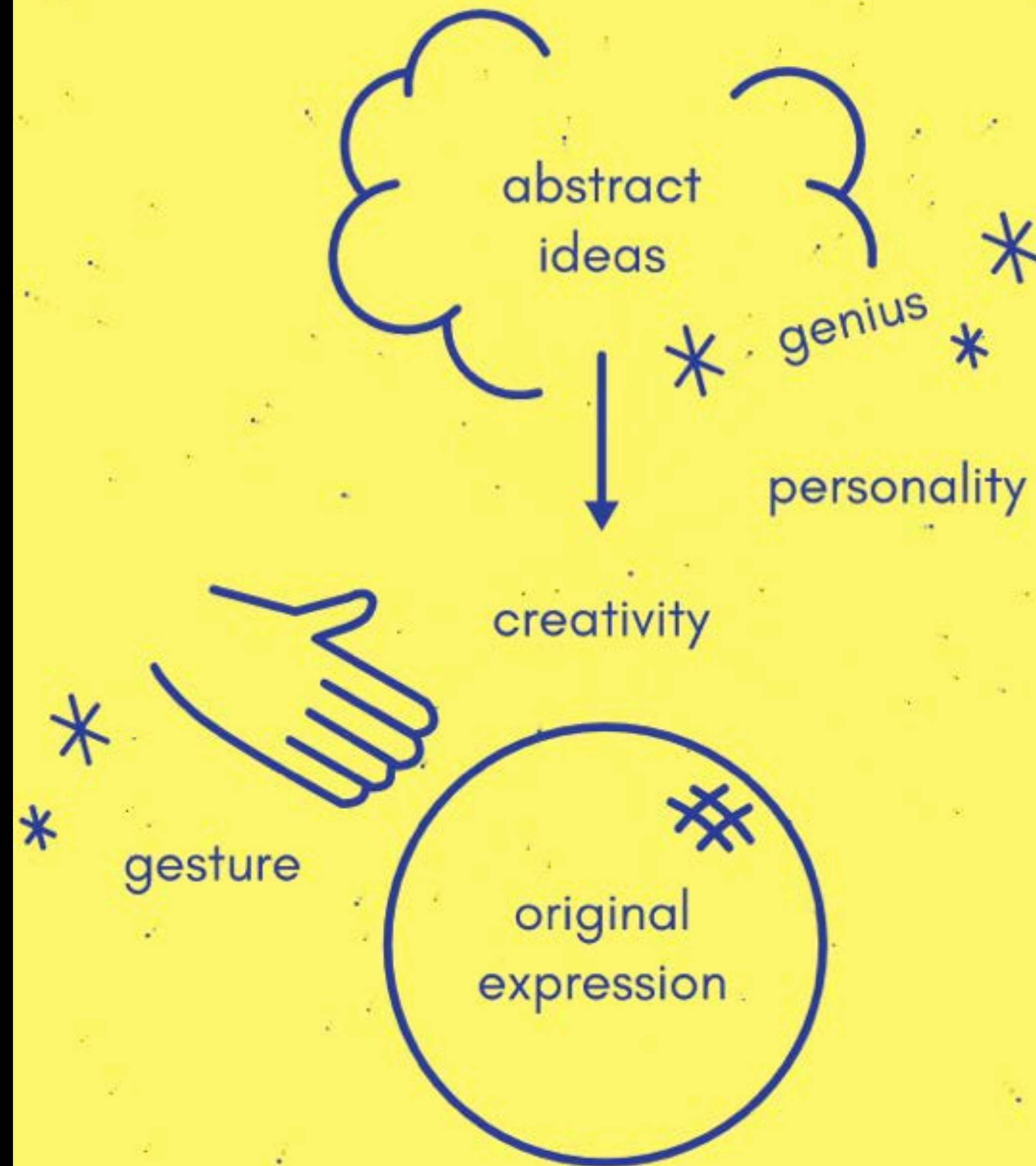
Creativity of internet users

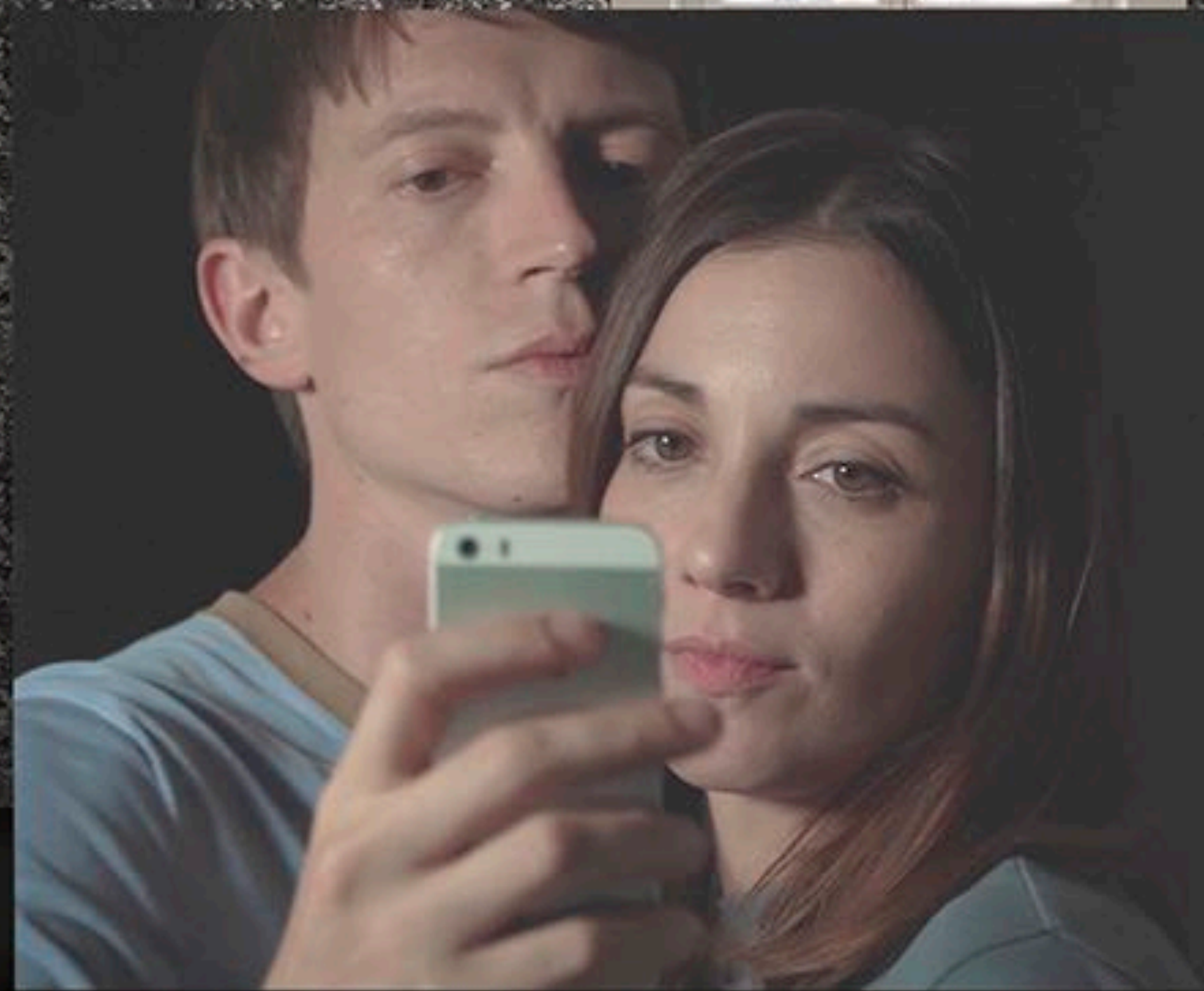


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3HaWxhbhH4c>



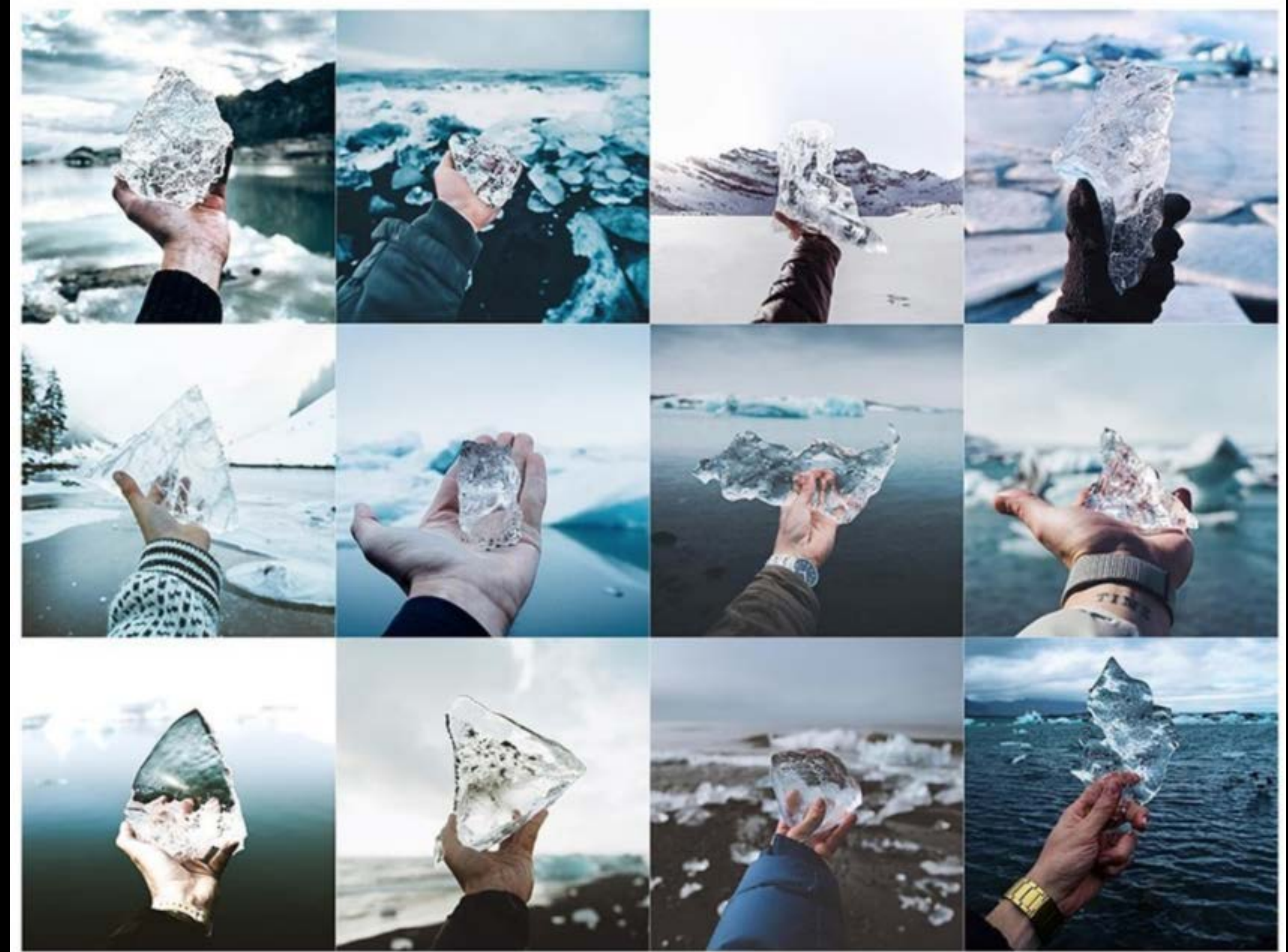
the mythology of authorship





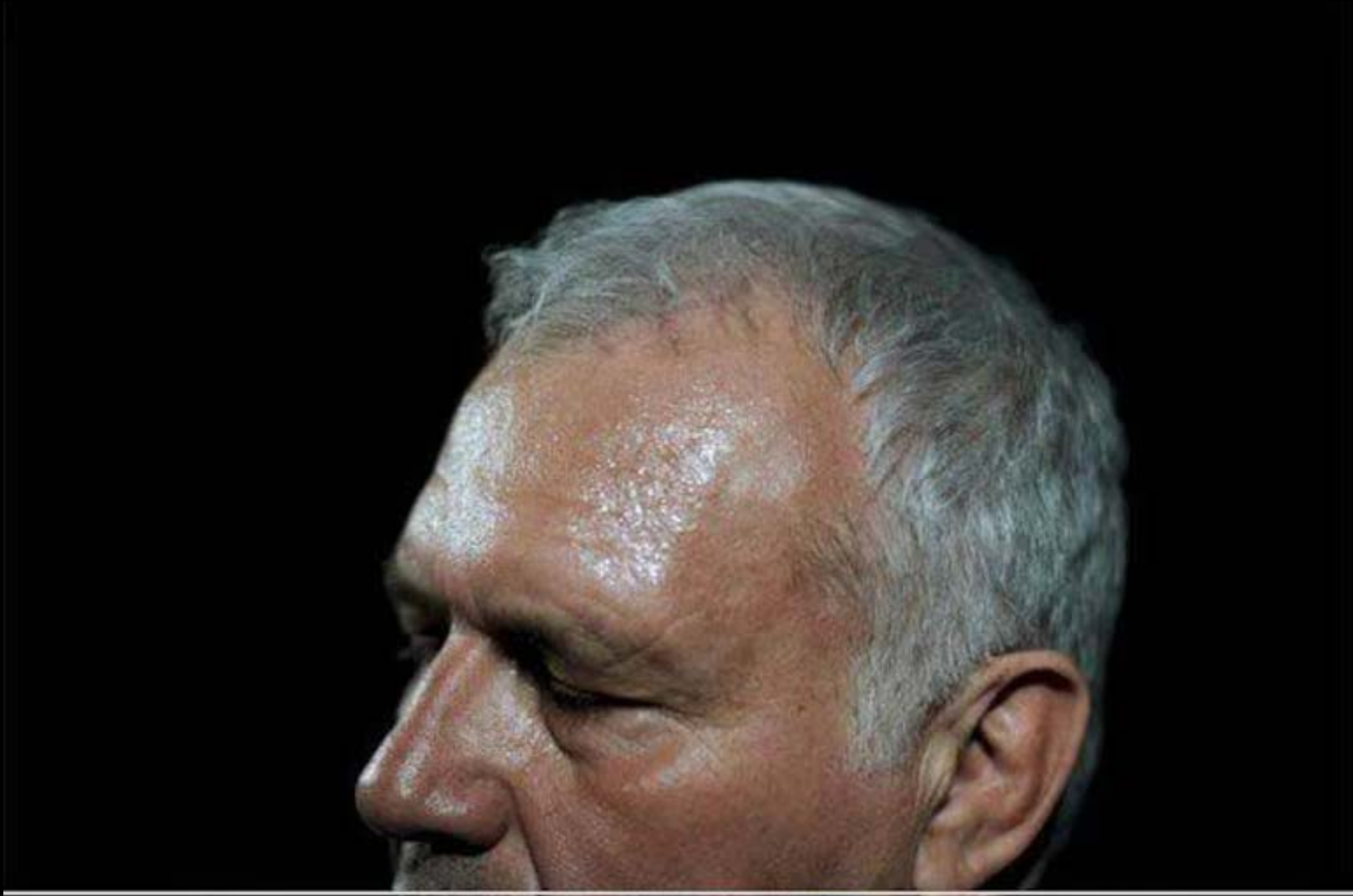
Governments of the Industrial World, you weary giants of flesh and steel, I come from Cyberspace, the new home of Mind. On behalf of the future, I ask you of the past to leave us alone. You are not welcome among us. You have no sovereignty where we gather.





Declaration of Human Rights. Article 27.2

Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he/she/they is the author.



- Instagram Features
- Manage Your Account
- Staying Safe
- Privacy, Security and Reporting
- Terms and Policies
- Community Guidelines
- Privacy Policy
- Terms of Use**
- Platform Policy
- Cookies Policy
- Transparency Center

[Terms and Policies](#)

Terms of Use

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These Terms of Use (or "Terms") govern your use of Instagram, except where we expressly state that separate terms (and not these) apply, and provide information about the Instagram Service (the "Service"), outlined below. When you create an Instagram account or use Instagram, you agree to these Terms. The Meta Terms of Service do not apply to this Service.

The Instagram Service is one of the [Meta Products](#), provided to you by Meta Platforms, Inc. These Terms of Use therefore constitute an agreement between you and Meta Platforms, Inc.

The Instagram Service

We agree to provide you with the Instagram Service. The Service includes all of the Instagram products, features, applications, services, technologies, and software that we provide to advance Instagram's mission: To bring you closer to the people and things you love. The Service is made up of the following aspects:

you to assign your copyright to the publisher (see the chapter 3.2, *Mutual Dependency: Publishers*). Employers will also make you want to assign your copyright, as detailed in chapter 5.3, *Mixed Authorship is the Norm: Graphic Design*. Finally, if you work on a large scale production such as a feature film, the production company will also want you to sign over copyright.

If you do still have the copyright, and others are interested in re-using your work, you can also issue them a license. You can tune the license with regards to the parameters that follow.

Scope of the license

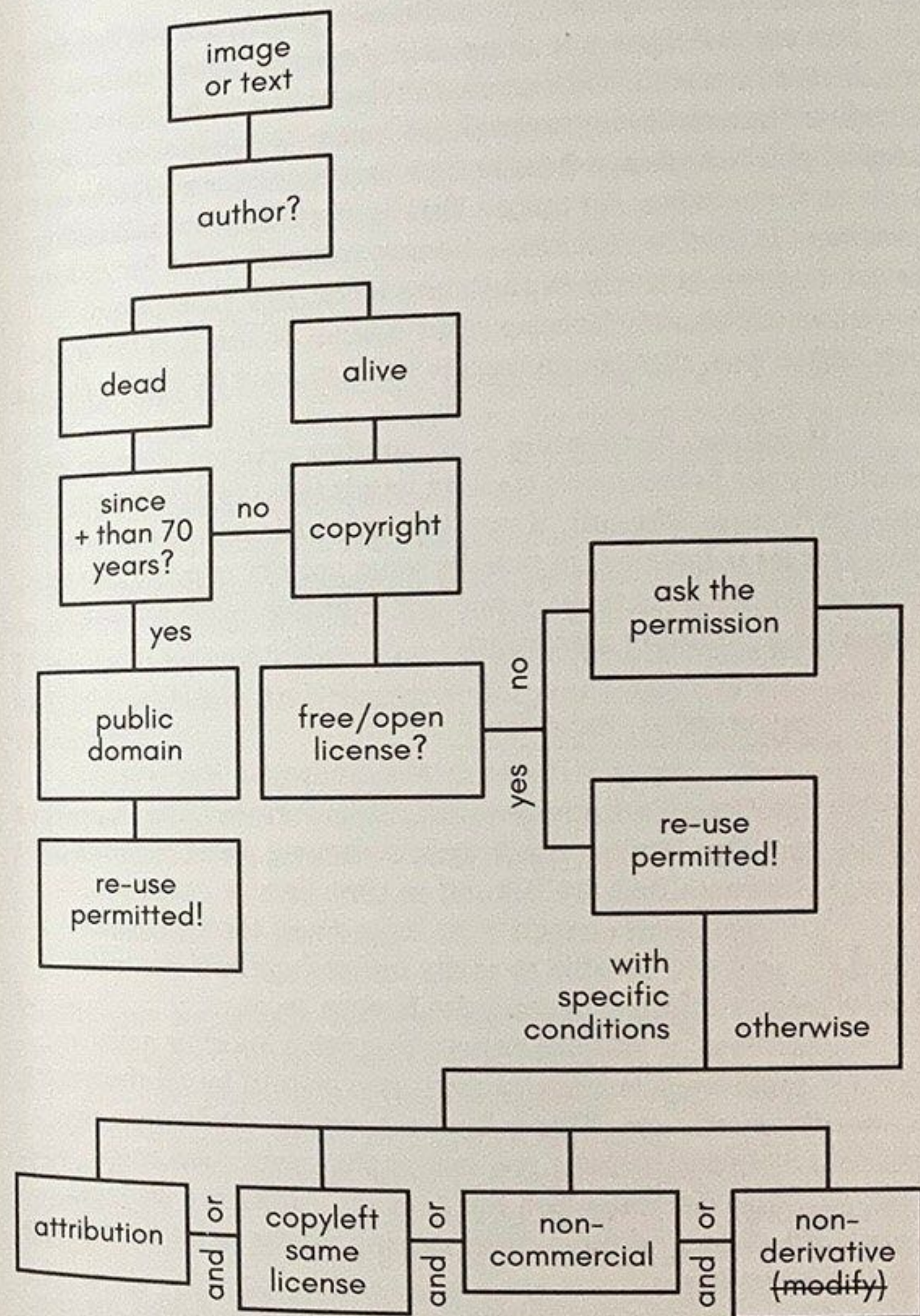
You can choose to license the creation of reproductions only for specific uses. For example, you give someone the right to use your photograph in a specific issue of a magazine. The idea is that if they want to use it again in another context, it is a different kind of use and they'll have to re-negotiate.

If you are negotiating with another artist to include their work in your project, such a scoped license is usually fine. However, you should be careful about scoping too narrowly, otherwise the license can become a burden on how you can exploit your own work! For example, if you obtain a license to use someone's photograph in your printed publication, you'll want to have a license that will also be valid for future editions, and for an eventual electronic edition of the publication.

Exclusive vs. non-exclusive

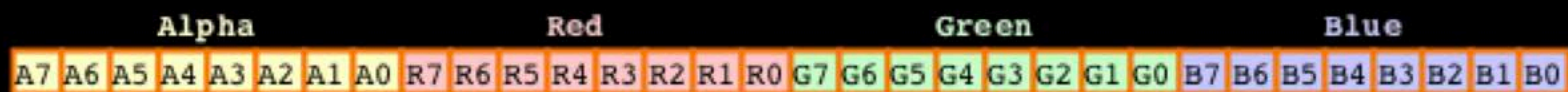
An exclusive license makes sure that only the one person or company who signs the license agreement can use the work, and no-one else. A non-exclusive license gives the copyright holder the freedom to license the work again on other occasions to other parties. An exclusive license could therefore be more expensive.

You should be careful with granting exclusive licenses. After all, you will lose the capacity to use the work even your-



GLAZE - glaze.cs.uchicago.edu

Affects how AI processes your image by shifting things on a pixel level so that the AI isn't able to train your style.



NIGHTSHADE - nightshade.cs.uchicago.edu

A tool that turns an image into a data sample that is unsuitable for model training.

ARTSHIELD - artshield.io

Embeds a watermark into your images.

MIST - github.com/psyker-team/mist-v2

Preprocessing tool designed for the purpose of protecting the content of an image.

KUDURRU - kudurru.ai

Actively blocks AI scrapers from your website.

Time for debate.