

an analysis of

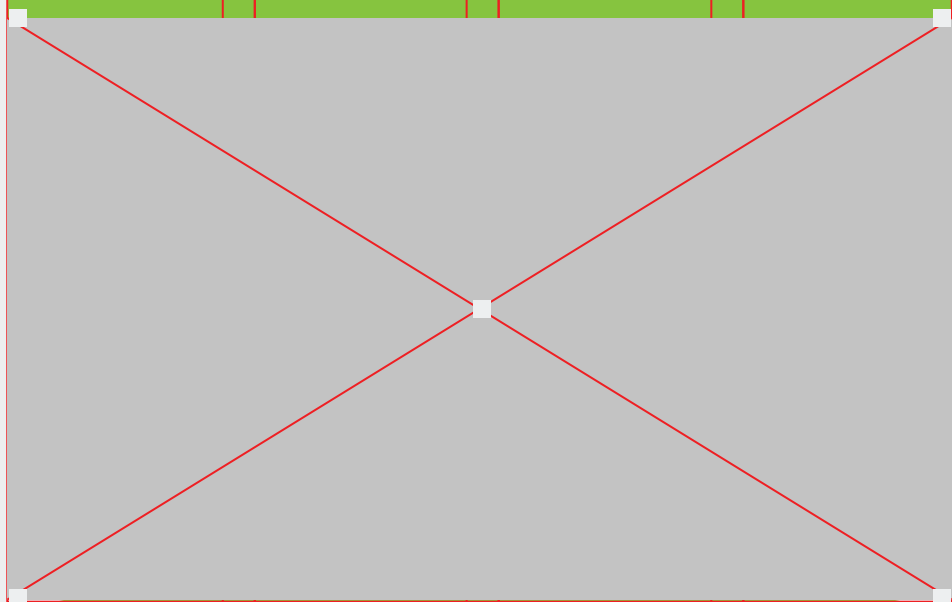
After art

V S

My work

Circulation

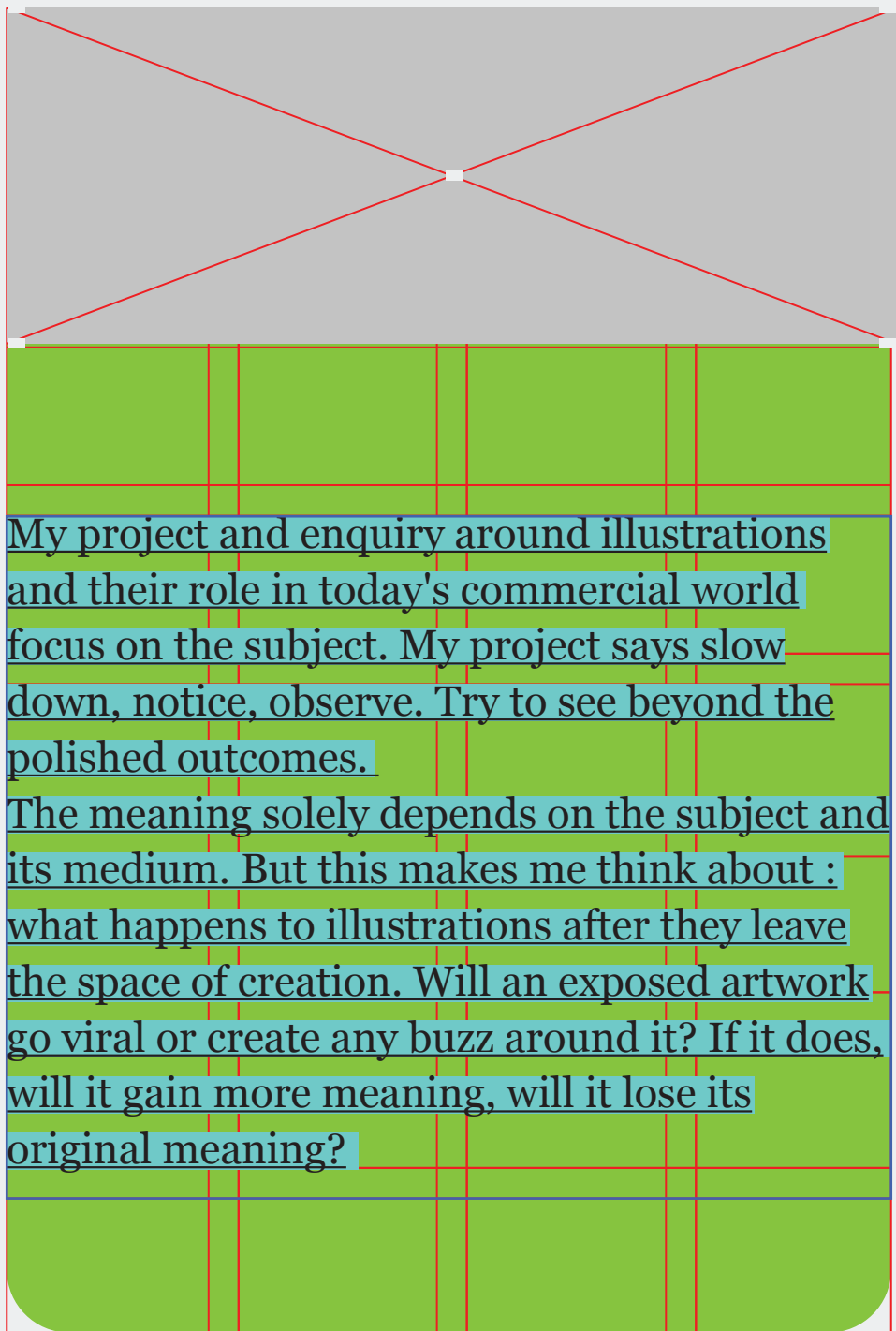
VS
Observation



David Joselit's After Art (2013)

backs away from the traditional approach of artist intent and production and looks at what happens to images once they are attached to the networks that circulate them.

Joselit (Joselit, 2013, p. 5) talks about how an image gains meaning by creating a touchpoint, the more touchpoints it can make, the more meaning it gains. He also describes it using the word buss and how the buzz is its moment of becoming. I assume, the becoming as in giving it true existence and meaning.



My project and enquiry around illustrations and their role in today's commercial world focus on the subject. My project says slow down, notice, observe. Try to see beyond the polished outcomes.

The meaning solely depends on the subject and its medium. But this makes me think about : what happens to illustrations after they leave the space of creation. Will an exposed artwork go viral or create any buzz around it? If it does, will it gain more meaning, will it lose its original meaning?

Custom illustrations contribute to a brand's unique identity versus the homogenisation that can happen when everything is pulled into a global network. AI and digital tools are impacting the uniqueness of illustrations and how they can either dilute or enhance the personal touch. This new global network has oversaturated our media with images that create a buzz which we then assume are art that have more meaning. The traditional pre-neo liberal markets when art was more site specific, it promoted inventing new content.

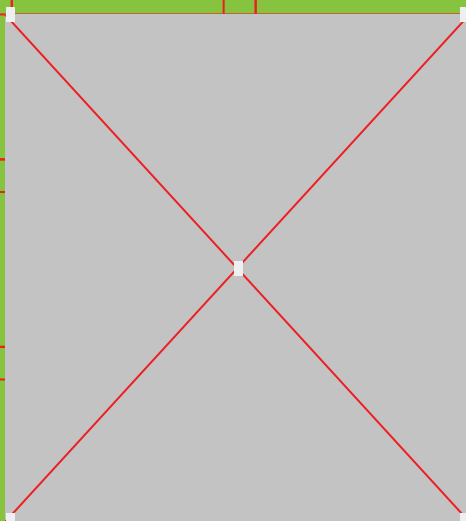


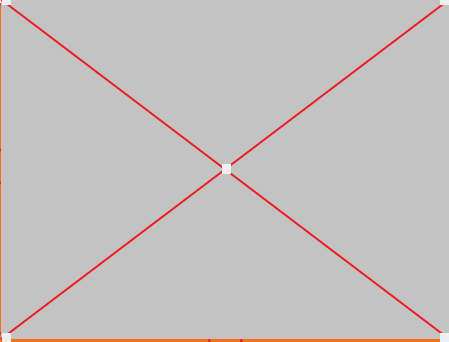


Image as migrant object

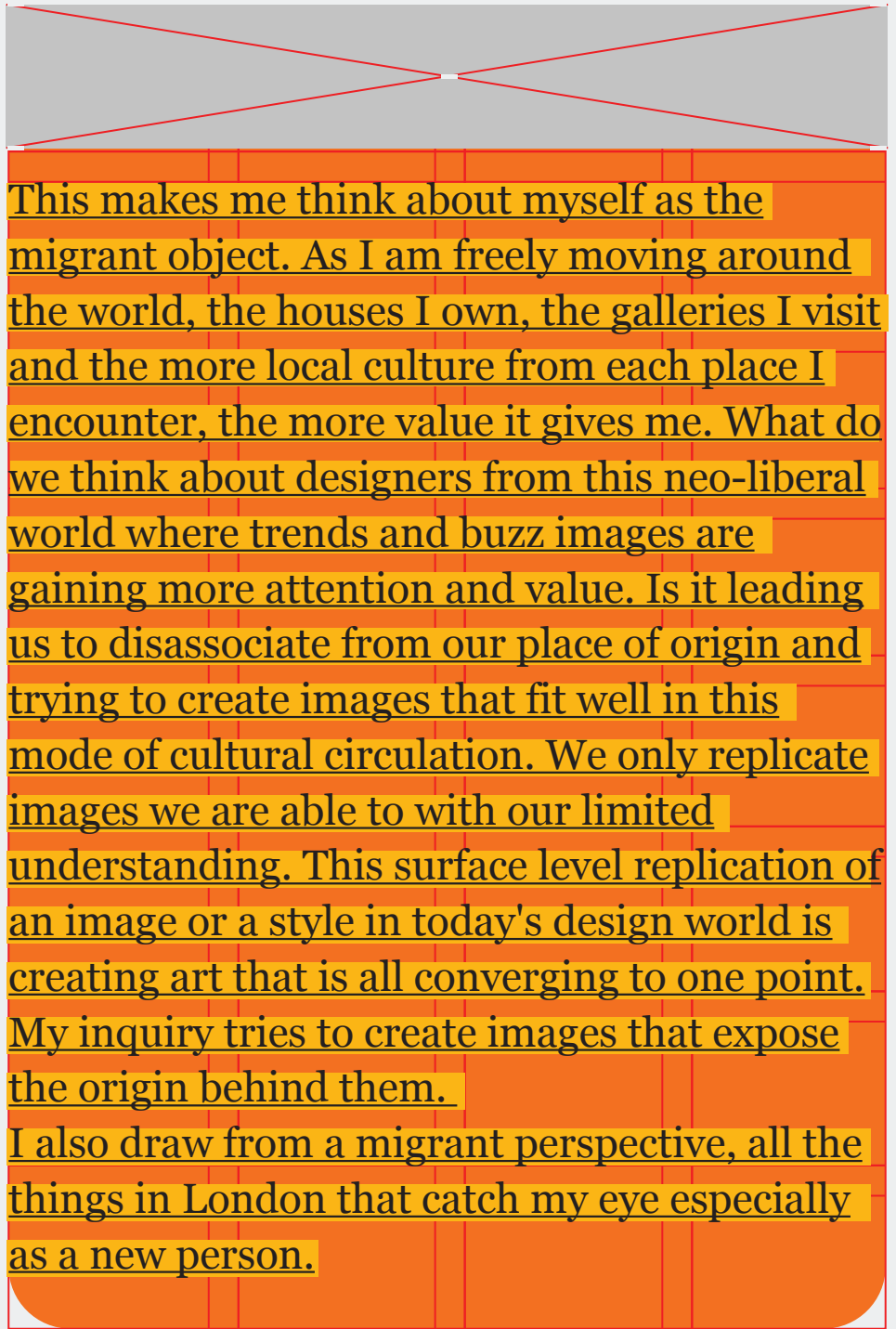
VS

Me as the migrant object

In the three paradigms of this circulation, Joselit argues that the objects gain more value as they travel freely and through a chain of ownership that takes place (Joselit, 2013, p. 14). Joselit argues, “Art’s power now resides less in what it is than in where it goes” (Joselit, After Art, p. 16) Images act like currency.



Joselit only talks about how the migrant object images gain value through global circulation and talks about James Cuno's encounter with a migrated object in Louvre. Here “human empathy” acts as a value giving tool.



This makes me think about myself as the migrant object. As I am freely moving around the world, the houses I own, the galleries I visit and the more local culture from each place I encounter, the more value it gives me. What do we think about designers from this neo-liberal world where trends and buzz images are gaining more attention and value. Is it leading us to disassociate from our place of origin and trying to create images that fit well in this mode of cultural circulation. We only replicate images we are able to with our limited understanding. This surface level replication of an image or a style in today's design world is creating art that is all converging to one point. My inquiry tries to create images that expose the origin behind them. I also draw from a migrant perspective, all the things in London that catch my eye especially as a new person.

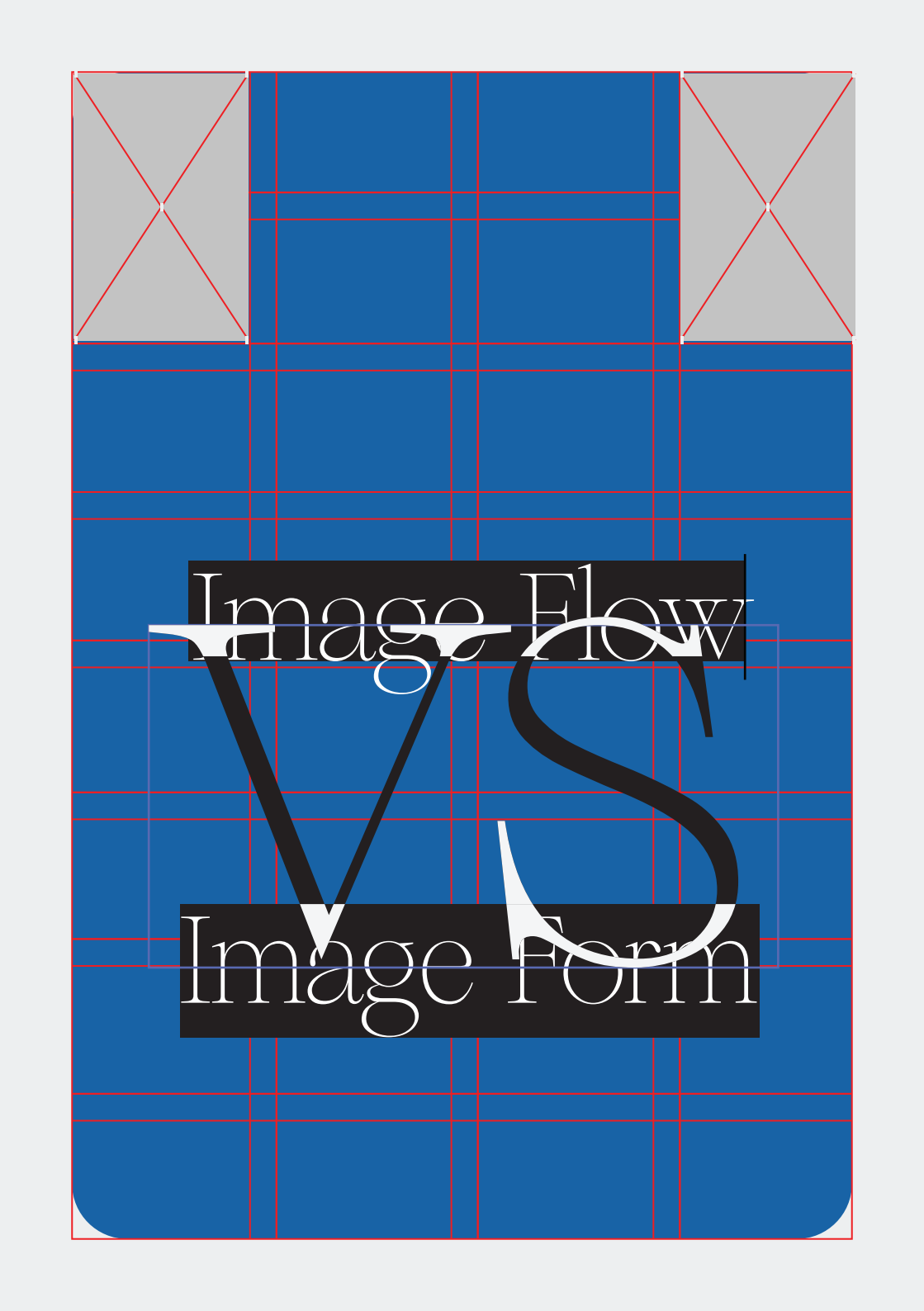
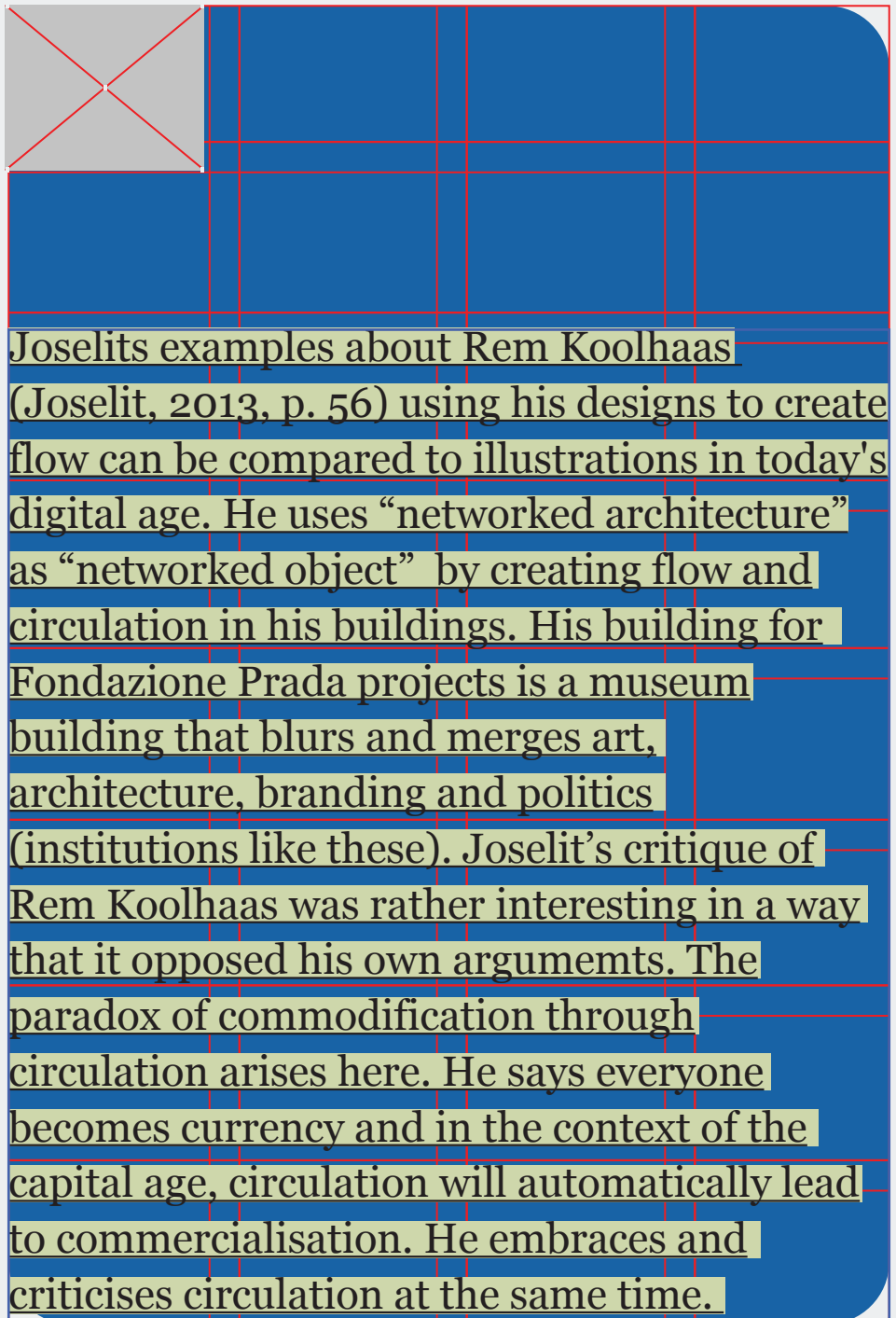


Image Flow

VS

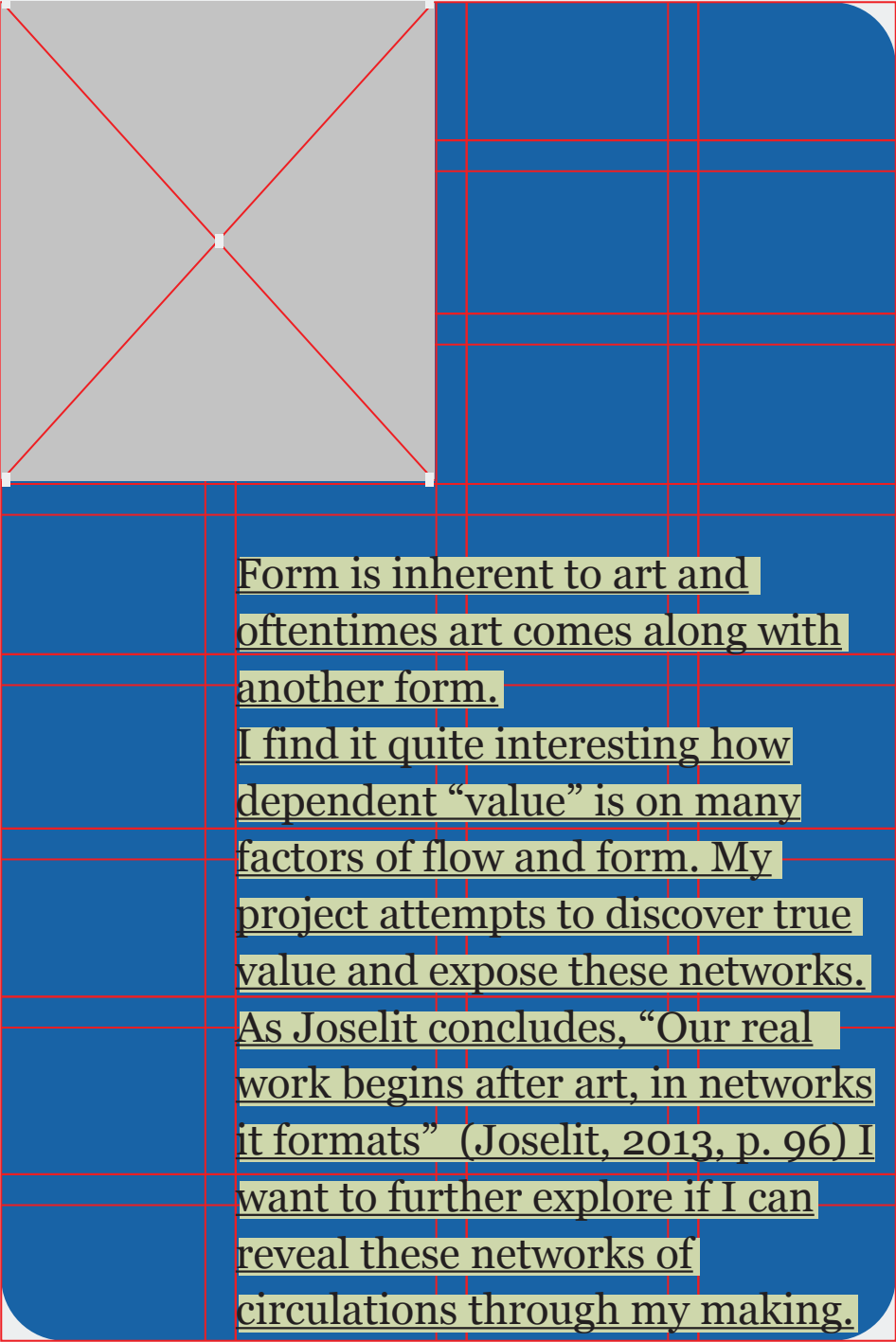
Image Form



Joselit's examples about Rem Koolhaas (Joselit, 2013, p. 56) using his designs to create flow can be compared to illustrations in today's digital age. He uses "networked architecture" as "networked object" by creating flow and circulation in his buildings. His building for Fondazione Prada projects is a museum building that blurs and merges art, architecture, branding and politics (institutions like these). Joselit's critique of Rem Koolhaas was rather interesting in a way that it opposed his own arguments. The paradox of commodification through circulation arises here. He says everyone becomes currency and in the context of the capital age, circulation will automatically lead to commercialisation. He embraces and criticises circulation at the same time.

My work has human elements without circulation, but with observation. It has everything and nothing to do with humans at the same time. My project is currently about observation, human moments and unfiltered data. Circulation when spoken about in terms of architecture relates to how people move within and around a structure.

To equate that in terms of illustration would be slightly different . Illustrations are seen in circulation in various networks, some flow alone, some flow with a piece of content and some act as a part of a packaging piece. Circulation acts both ways as the illustrations also move along with people who interact with it. Most circulation has an inherent cost to it.

The image is a graphic design. The top-left corner features a light gray square with a red 'X' formed by two diagonal lines. The rest of the image has a blue background with a red grid pattern. The grid lines are spaced evenly, creating a series of squares. The text is placed within the grid, starting from the middle of the second row and second column.

Form is inherent to art and
oftentimes art comes along with
another form.

I find it quite interesting how
dependent “value” is on many
factors of flow and form. My
project attempts to discover true
value and expose these networks.
As Joselit concludes, “Our real
work begins after art, in networks
it formats” (Joselit, 2013, p. 96) I
want to further explore if I can
reveal these networks of
circulations through my making.

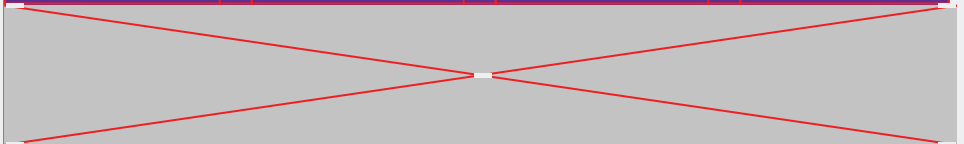


Centripetal

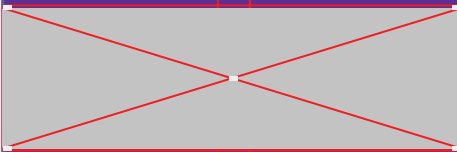
Centrifugal

Joselit (2013, p. 33) talks about centrifugal and centripetal ways of giving art meaning. Joselit contrasts this centripetal model with Le Corbusier's idea of the architectural promenade. (Joselit, 2013, p. 48) In this concept, the viewer moves through space, and meaning unfolds through motion and perspective shifts and third memory all speak about people's interpretations of the spectators that gives it meaning.

Joselit argues how centrifugal ways of looking at architecture directly relate to the person using the house. He expands by giving examples of two different houses designed for family and a bachelor, describing the unfolding of architecture when one enters a space. In art, assigning meaning merely reduces the art to a commodity and is often critiqued. But Corbusier's architecture is also a commodity and art at the same time? What is the case with illustrations in the context of design?



I think much like architecture, here art for arts sake does not apply. The meaning arises from centripetal ways of making and later by centrifugal ways of circulation. But it is tricky to say with illustrations as it has a clear overlap with art as its central aesthetic.



Especially methods of production of an illustration are all derived from the principles of traditional art.

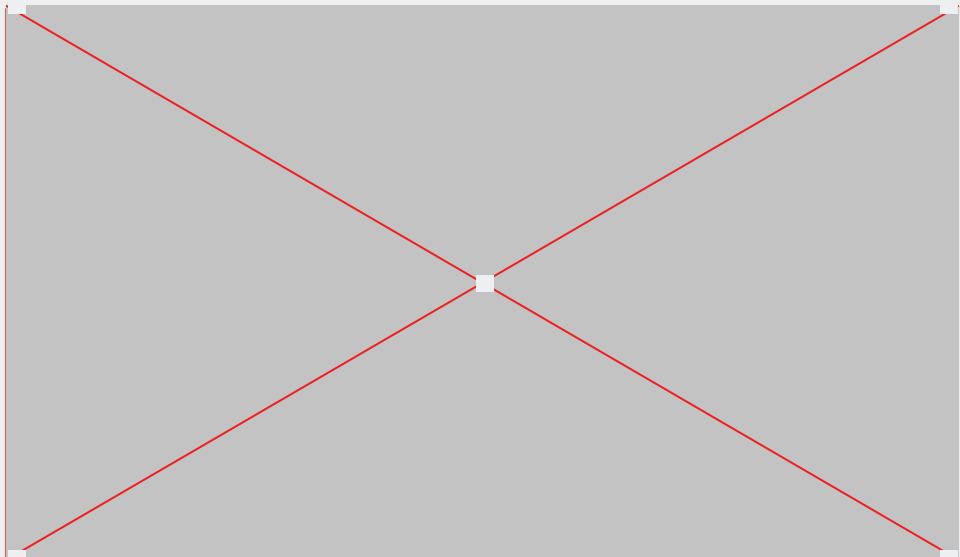
Has the commodification of traditional art led to a place where we are using the centripetal meaning of art to leverage a product and assign meaning to it by pairing it with a reproducible version of traditional art? In easy words, we are pasting forms, colours, expressions (in the form of an illustration) on packaging, brands, communications to assign deeper aesthetic value to them.

My illustrations, especially the moments of joy in London, already have a centrifugal quality. I'm not fixing meaning inside an image, I'm observing how people, places, and feelings circulate, overlap, and create small moments of connection. My work enacts Joselit's centrifugal vision: the joy doesn't sit in the drawing, it expands outward through the act of noticing and the context of the city.

In my current project with riso print and edit modes of production, there was heavy focus on the centrepetal ways of assigning meaning. Which arises from the methods of production and their visibility in the art. Joselit's theory brings me to think about how I could combine the two and create meaning through production and circulation at the same time.

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After art made me realise the existence of everything that culture is made of, right from fashion, food, art, etc existed as art before it was commercialised. Culture shifts and moves and moulds as everyone participates in it. Joselit argues that culture operates through networks of circulation, where images and objects gain meaning and value through their movement across different contexts (Joselit, 2013). My first project relating to my reading, tells me that I am part of this culture of circulation of art in the space of graphic design. I recognise how I control the movement of images or stop them by safeguarding them by certain rules of how others must use them. Talking about appropriation in this context makes sense, as everything gets pulled into a homogenised network. What gives art value? Circulation or the lack of it? This tension between control and flow became a defining aspect of my practice and theoretical inquiry.



The second studio work also provoked me to think about the “after” part of my “art”. By asking what happens after art is made, how people interact with it, and how meaning is produced through engagement and movement. My exploration with AI modules of creating art also play a part in the homogenisation as it builds on an already existing network. I think art should gain meaning through production and through circulation. In today's world, circulation, buzz, trends have taken over the way we are producing art. I use the term art broadly here, just like Joselit's reference to art.

Museums and their identities are a good example to look at when we talk about commercialisation of art. Joselit mentions that museums hold images and the images are like currency. A basic ten pound tote bag suddenly turns fifty pounds when starry night is printed on it. There are multiple networks of art circulation that are in interplay with each other, tangible museum geographic art and digital free flowing commercial art. In image making, value has been taken from art and is informing the new art, this leads to further commodification of art especially in the field of branding and illustration.

My position at the start of the project began with the thought of homogenisation of people and illustrations, using “the white lotus” as a reference that uses traditional art and commercialises it. Since engaging with Joselit’s writing, my position has evolved. I now see my practice less as documenting homogenisation and more as interrogating it, exploring how commodification assigns and redistributes value through images. I want to explore and study the value assigned to products in relation to art.

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