1. A small annotated bibliography of 6 references—2 references from the reading list, 2 from your own research, and 2 practices or projects—that have some interesting relationship to your new iterations. Look for references that specifically challenge, stretch, or deepen the approach you were taking. Maybe they give you a new critical angle on a topic you’re exploring. Maybe they suggest a new process or method to test out.

2 x Reading List:

**Benjamin, W. (1935/1969). ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, in Arendt, H. (ed.) *Illuminations.* New York: Schocken Books, pp. 1-26.**

Benjamin’s notion of experiencing the ‘aura’ of an object was significant in providing a certain intentionality to the second set of iterations. Benjamin describes aura, which is intrinsically linked to the distance between a viewer and an object, as a form of perceiving through feeling, rather than perfect vision (such as the shadow of a branch falling on your arm in the sunlight). I wanted to convey this through the loose, blurry image-making quality of the pastels, the idea being to try and evoke the aura of the bouquet rather than an accurate depiction. Additionally, distance became an important part of the grids in the second week, which follow a sequence of 1x1, 2x2, 3x3 and so on. The greater the number of squares in the grid, the further away the viewer is from the object, which also unintentionally resulted in a progression (or perhaps regression) of image quality.

**Steyerl, H. (2012). ‘In Defense of the Poor Image’in Steyerl, H. *The Wretched of the Screen.* Sternberg Press.**

Visually, the lack of detail in the illustrations and fuzzy quality of pastels as a medium certainly evokes much of what Steyerl writes about the qualities (or merits) of poor images. But moreover, this text is valuable in further clarifying the effect that this quality has on the role and reception of these images. Steyerl writes that poor images “transform quality into accessibility”, which was an angle I hadn’t considered before. Is there a correlation between subjectivity or ambiguity and accessibility? I suppose there is. The idea to allow for a vagueness in the reading of the illustrations was so that the viewer can draw on their own emotions, situated knowledges and perception of colour, arrangement, and text to form a sense of understanding around the images. This was certainly the case for me when drawing with the pastels — there is obviously a mistranslation of my own references and ideas through the drawings that will read differently for each viewer. But I believe the fact that Steyerl considers accessibility helps dispel the stigma of the poor image, but also allows for humour. The inclusion of random words with each page of illustration is in reference to her note on deliberately misspelled filenames.

2 x Non-Reading List:

**Le Guin, U. (1988) *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*. Reprint. London: Ignota, 2019.**

While Le Guin’s text offers a counter narrative to the human origin story, I was particularly drawn to how she describes stories as having a shape or form, which both influences and is influenced by the content of that story. Her proposal of the vessel being the first form of technology, as opposed to the spear, can extend to narrative-building and I believe in the case of my project, image-making, as it allows for multiplicity in meaning and interpretation. My intention was to use the images to propose a story or idea that is formed from a gathering of multiple parts of value (i.e. the situated knowledges of the viewer), rather than offer a concrete universal message, hence the abstractness of the images. Additionally, I found Le Guin’s carrier bag metaphor useful in seeing my iterations through some kind of critical lens; the references found mirror the act of gathering she writes about, which have begun to give a vague shape to my line of enquiry. Or story, as I like to think of it.

**LeWitt, Sol. (1967) ‘Paragraphs on Conceptual Art’ in *Artforum, Summer 1967*. Available at: https://www.artforum.com/print/196706/paragraphs-on-conceptual-art-36719 (Accessed: May 01).**

LeWitt’s manifesto offers much food for thought regarding subjectivity, rules and fabrication. Many of the decisions made in my iterations share commonalities with the characteristics of conceptual art that is described, such as the use of a simple arithmetic (the grid, in my case) as a framework which to work from — “of very limited importance; it becomes the grammar for the total work.” LeWitt argues this reduces subjectivity in the work, which I agree with in terms of a set of rules to work from, but interestingly the outcome of the iterations is very much rooted in a subjective reading. The being said, LeWitt does write that the audience’s comprehension of conceptual art is of little consequence and out of the hands of the artist, which I considered despite producing the illustrations as objectively as possible. If situating my work within conceptual art practice, then my own intentions are the concept, but I think differs from LeWitt in that it is a concept that is ironically concerned with a subjective reading of the blurry illustrations and text pairings, rather than this subjectivity being a condition of the nature of conceptual art. Whereas LeWitt states, “Different people will understand the same thing in a different way” as a consequence, it is both concept and consequence for my iterations.

2 x Design Practices/Projects:

**Jensen, A. (1978) *Twelve Events in a Dual Universe* [Painting]. National Gallery of Art, New York. Available at: https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.138468.html (Accessed May 05, 2022).**

Grids are both an aesthetic driver of Jensen’s abstract work, as well as its conceptual underpinning. The grids I was drawing during the first week of iterations were somewhat arbitrary, changing only in size at irregular intervals. Jensen’s work offers a sense of logic to the grid, used to explore colour theory and pattern making, while in the case of this painting, explaining a series of number systems inscribed on the squares. While the exact function of the numbers is unclear, it fits within a wider context of numerical logic in arithmetic, astronomy and calendars that Jensen was interested in. Importantly in relation to my work, the logic is an evocation of something more, perhaps a mathematical metaphor of sorts. Drawing from this, the second week of iterations saw me organise my grids in a numerical sequence, starting from a 1x1 grid, followed by 2x2 and so on, until 26x26. Although functioning differently to Jensen’s, filling the squares was an exercise in its own pattern making and having a fixed sequence began to establish a sort of pattern to the patterns as the grids became denser and ‘higher resolution’. I believe having the underlying geometric structure was perhaps helpful in making the iterations easier to understand or engage with, despite being quite random in form.

**Sincich, J. (2021) *ATM* [Quilted cotton]. Available at: https://www.jeffreysincich.com/work/atm (Accessed May 02, 2022).**

I found some clear visual parallels between my project and Sincich’s quilts in that in both cases, the outcome of the work is based around the simple pairing of colourful text and images. Initially I was focussing on drawing images alone onto the grids but found Sincich’s work to be quite compelling in how the use of single words or phrases allowed for a more abstract or unclear presentation of the image, which is what I eventually tried to incorporate during the second week of iterations. I found this particular quilt to be effective, as the typography is created in the same graphic language as the rest of the image and becomes an important part of the quilt itself, and not necessarily an add-on. By drawing the type out on different sized grids than the images themselves, I wanted to try and establish a hierarchy, as is evident in Sincich’s quilts, while also using the same language of the grid to try and make the text feel more like a natural fit with the images, despite being random and unrelated.

2. A short statement (also 100–200 words) that articulates your line of enquiry. A line of enquiry (or a ‘critical question’) is a continually refined question— framed by a specific topic, method, and/or medium— that you explore through making. What are you researching, and how? Be as specific as possible. *(Tip: Don’t try to write this during the first week. Wait until your iterations have developed meaningfully.)*

*A-Z: A Bouquet From a Distance* explores how reductive image-making can be used to convey what Walter Benjamin describes as the ‘aura’ of an object, rather than the object itself. Through a series of simple pastel drawings, translating a still life of a bouquet onto a series of grids that sequentially increase in density (and thus resolution) this project considers how meaning can be derived from these abstractions, based on the individual subjectivity and situated knowledges of the viewer. Drawings are intended to be suggestive and not prescriptive, each paired with a single word to further suggest a possible connotation, feeling or meaning that can be derived from the pairing. In reference to Ursula Le Guin’s *Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, this exercise in an enquiry into beginning to form form the ‘shape’ of meaning, eventually leading to understanding itself.

Unit 2: Positions through Iterating – Feedback

What’s working:

* Meaningful shift in iterations between the two weeks by using the constraints to focus on the line of enquiry
* A good balance between focused intention and iterative open-endedness
* A physical catalogue mimics the actual product catalogues these types of companies have and can be mailed out

What’s not working:

* Perhaps the shift in iterations between the first and second week wasn’t distinct enough
* Multiple meanings and readings of the work could be a double edged sword?

To develop this further/in future projects:

* Beginning to find connections through references — continue finding these to keep homing in on and refining the critical enquiry