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Master's Thesis
Academic Year 2025

Designing a Prompt-Based Web Tool for Artists'
Writing: A Poststructuralist Creative Writing
Approach to Non-linear, Self-reflective, and
Open-Interpretive Texts



Keio University
Graduate School of Media Design

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A Master's Thesis
submitted to Keio University Graduate School of Media Design
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Media Design

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Abstract of Master's Thesis of Academic Year 2025

Designing a Prompt-Based Web Tool for Artists' Writing:
A Poststructuralist Creative Writing Approach to
Non-linear, Self-reflective, and Open-Interpretive Texts

Category: Design

Summary

This research investigates how artists can be better supported in writing about their own creative practices, particularly when traditional writing formats feel misaligned with the embodied, intuitive, and nonlinear nature of art-making. Drawing from *deconstruction* philosophy by Jacques Derrida and poststructuralist creative writing techniques, the research identifies core challenges in current practices through secondary analysis of artist blogs and semi-structured interviews with practicing artists. In response, a series of design interventions were developed through a *research-through-practice* methodology [1]: a paper-based prompt tool, a reflective sticker kit, and a final dual-format system combining a prompt-based writing website with a physical pamphlet. The final design applied fragmented, poetic, and palimpsestic writing modes and were evaluated through a preliminary accessibility test and a 21-day user engagement study following an unstructured interview. Findings show that non-linear and fragmentary writing prompts can enhance intuitive artistic expression, while the integration of digital and physical formats creates new possibilities for reflective communication, collaboration, and exhibition. This work contributes to design research by demonstrating how interaction design, informed by creative writing theory and philosophical inquiry, can produce alternative, artist-centered tools for reflective writing.

Keywords:

artistic writing, creative writing, poststructuralism, interaction design, collaborative design

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Contents

Acknowledgements	viii
1 Introduction	1
1.1. Research Background	1
1.2. Scope of Artist	2
1.3. Research Overview	4
2 Related Works	6
2.1. Poststructuralist Creative Writing	6
2.1.1 Fragmentation	6
2.1.2 Poetic Structure and the Strategy of Sensation	7
2.2. Interpretation and Meaning Making	8
2.2.1 Writing Identity and Its Openness for Interpretation	9
2.2.2 Viewers as Co-Creators of Meaning	9
2.3. Creativity Support Tools	10
2.3.1 Case Study 1: Supporting Cognitive Creativity in Writing	11
2.3.2 Case Study 2: Designing Intuitive Interfaces for Professional Creators	12
3 Design	13
3.1. Chapter Overview	13
3.2. Identifying the Problem Space	14
3.2.1 Secondary Research on Artistic Writing Challenges	14
3.2.2 Primary Artist Research: Interview	16
3.3. Design Iteration	20
3.3.1 First Prototype: Paper-Based Prompts	20
3.3.2 Second Prototype: A Reflective Sticker Kit	24

3.3.3	Synthesis of Insights	29
3.4.	Final Design	32
3.4.1	Design Objectives	32
3.4.2	Unfold: A Prompt-Based Web Tool	34
3.4.3	The Physical Outcome: A Pamphlet	45
4	Validation	53
4.1.	Validation Structure	53
4.2.	Phase I: Preliminary Accessibility Test	54
4.2.1	Objectives	54
4.2.2	Methodology and Participants	54
4.2.3	Key Feedback and Design Revisions	54
4.3.	Phase II: Longitudinal Engagement Study	58
4.3.1	Validation Focus	58
4.3.2	Methodology	59
4.4.	Findings and Discussion	61
4.4.1	Fragmentary Writing Enhances Artistic and Intuitive Ex- pression	61
4.4.2	The Dual-Format Tool Fosters New Modes of Artistic Com- munication	63
4.4.3	Future Use Cases and System Sustainability	65
5	Conclusion	68
5.1.	Limitations	68
5.2.	Future Work: Toward an Automated Print Feature	68
5.3.	Conclusion	70
	References	72
	Appendices	75
A.	Transcription of Recordings of Artist’s 21-Day Engagement with the Web Tool	75

List of Figures

1.1	A Talk With Indonesian Artist Milo	3
1.2	Milo's Artworks At The Exhibition <i>The Niche of The Mirage</i> @Kocogarden	4
3.1	First Interview Questions Sheet	18
3.2	The Paper-Based Prompt	22
3.3	User Test of the Paper-Based Prompt	24
3.4	The Reflective Sticker Kit	25
3.5	Interview Questions Sheet For Use of the Reflective Sticker Kit .	27
3.6	Documentation of Artist Using The Sticker Kit	28
3.7	Overall Design Thinking Process From Gathering Requirements to Deriving Design Principles	30
3.8	Reflective-Communicative Circulation of the Dual-Format System	33
3.9	Design Components	34
3.10	Prompts of the Three Writing Modes	36
3.11	Information Architecture of the Website <i>Unfold</i>	37
3.12	Welcome Page of Unfold	38
3.13	Meditation Page of Unfold	39
3.14	Select-Text-Mode Page of Unfold	39
3.15	Prompt Page of Unfold	40
3.16	Features Groups of the Web Tool	41
3.17	User Flow of the Dispersed Texts	42
3.18	Three Display Pages of Three Writing Modes	44
3.19	Workflow of the Ideal Print Feature	45
3.20	Pamphlet Page 1-4	47
3.21	Pamphlet Page 5-8	48
3.22	Pamphlet Page 9-12	49

3.23	Pamphlet Page 13-16	50
3.24	Pamphlet Page 17-20	51
3.25	The Printed Pamphlet	52
4.1	Design Revision of the Select-Text-Mode Page	56
4.2	Design Revision of the Prompt-Writing Page(Progress Indicator)	57
4.3	Design Revision of the Prompt-Writing Page(Back Button) . . .	57
4.4	The Space of Kocogarden	59
4.5	Artist's Visual Artwork	60
4.6	Dialogic Flow of The Unstructured Interview	62
4.7	Actor-Network Diagram(A)	64
4.8	Actor-Network Diagram(B)	66
4.9	Actor-Network Diagram(C)	67
5.1	AI-generated Images From Different AI Models Under Prompt X	70

List of Tables

3.1	Thematic Coding Matrix of Interview Excerpts	17
4.1	Prompts Revisions	55
4.2	Demographics of Participant Artist	59

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Research Background

Writing about artistic practice often poses a profound challenge for artists, particularly because it demands the translation of embodied, nonlinear, and sensory processes into structured, linear texts. As artist-researcher Simo Kellokumpu states it, this translation effort involves “translating the non-linear practice and the skills and sensitivities that operate within it into a linear text,”¹ a process that inherently risks flattening the depth and fluidity of artistic experience. Much of what occurs in creative practice is not purely conceptual or linguistic, but embodied and affective as Kellokumpu writes, “bodily orientation to a space in which the sensory and kinaesthetic sensitivities that locate the body are simultaneously activated in multiple directions.”² Such multi-sensory and intuitive modalities resist fixed structures, making conventional reflective writing feel both reductive and alienating.

Further complicating this difficulty is the influence of institutional and market-driven forms of art discourse. After formal education, artists often encounter writing expectations rooted in persuasive or promotional language. As noted by writer and artist Sara Woster, “once an artist leaves art school the language we apply to our artwork focuses on trying to convince gallery owners and curators...

1 Simo Kellokumpu, *Artist-Researcher and the Challenge of Writing*, in *Dance Arts – Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Practices*, Theatre Academy University of the Arts Helsinki. An essay of the disconnect between artistic practice and scholarly writing. Accessed November 20, 2024. <https://disco.teak.fi/tanssin-historia/en/artist-researcher-and-the-challenge-of-writing/>

2 Ibid.

It is often, quite honestly, a lot of blah, blah, blah.”³ This shift toward marketing-oriented writing foregrounds trends, materialities, and theoretical tropes, often at the expense of sincerity, vulnerability, or poetic reflection.

Underlying these tensions is a fundamental philosophical limitation: language is finite, while artistic experience is not. As Woster questions, “That’s the true challenge of the finite nature of language. Without an infinite language, how can we ever hope to find the words to write about that supernatural thing?”⁴ The inability to fully capture the ineffable aspects of creative work through words creates a disconnect between what artists feel and what they are able or expected to express in writing.

This research emerges from this disconnect, asking how creative, philosophical, and design-based approaches might be leveraged to create alternative systems for artistic writing. It investigates how tools rooted in deconstructive philosophy, creative writing strategies, and interaction design might offer more open-ended, reflective, and resonant forms of engagement for artists navigating the challenge of writing about their own practice.

1.2. Scope of Artist

This research does not define the term artist by medium, institutional affiliation, or disciplinary boundaries such as “fine artist” or “installation artist.” Instead, it adopts a process-based scope: artists are defined here as individuals who place value on writing as part of their creative inquiry. The focus is on those who view texts not merely as documentation, but as a reflective tool, a space for experimentation, articulation, and exploration of thought.

This approach is grounded in the observation that writing within artistic practice is often non-linear, fragmentary, intuitive, and bodily. As Kellokumpu de-

3 Sara Woster, *Why is Writing About Art So Difficult?*, blog post, September 14, 2022. An essay of the challenges involved in translating visual art into language. Accessed November 20, 2024. <https://lithub.com/why-is-writing-about-art-so-difficult/>

4 Ibid.



(Source: Author's Archive)

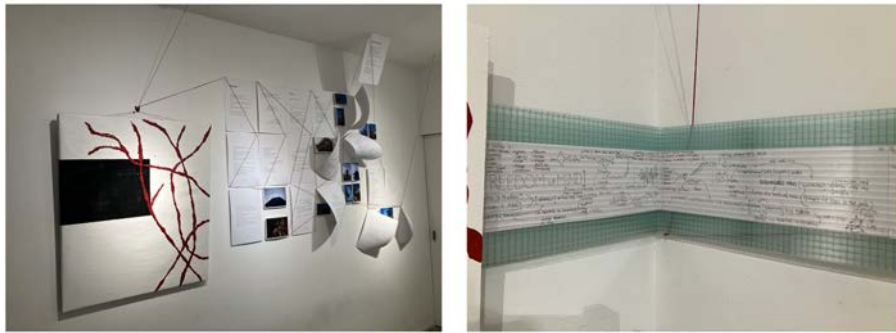
Figure 1.1 A Talk With Indonesian Artist Milo

scribes, “I do not write *about* art, but *with* art and artistic practice”⁵. Kellokumpu continues to cite Annette Arlander’s critique, “The juxtaposition of artistic work and writing easily leads to all kinds of dead ends, such as the idea that first you make a work of art, and then, when you reflectively write about it, the work becomes research”⁶. This indicates that the clarifications between artistic creation and writing is not as reasonable as it appears to be.

This is clearly exemplified in a conversation with Indonesian artist Milo, who uses writing, particularly mind mapping not as an afterthought but as part of his artwork itself. For him, the practice of mapping language and ideas is a technique to “reel the fishing rod back after casting it far forward”, a poetic metaphor for retrieving insights from the unconscious through intuitive structuring. His

5 Simo Kellokumpu, *Artist-Researcher and the Challenge of Writing*, in *Dance Arts – Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Practices*, Theatre Academy University of the Arts Helsinki. An essay of the disconnect between artistic practice and scholarly writing. Accessed November 20, 2024. <https://disco.teak.fi/tanssin-historia/en/artist-researcher-and-the-challenge-of-writing/>

6 Ibid.



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 1.2 Milo's Artworks At The Exhibition *The Niche of The Mirage* @Kocogarden

maps become both visual and cognitive instruments, creating space for unexpected associations that directly shape the trace of his art-making.

The artists engaged in this research, through interviews, user tests, and writing tools share a commitment to treating writing as a creative act rather than a means of justification. Whether they use reflective journaling, scattered notes, spatial text arrangements, or poem-like fragments, they all share an investment in the relationship between language and making. They treat language as a material of thought, something to shape, explore, and perform, not merely explain.

1.3. Research Overview

This research explores how philosophical strategies particularly drawn from deconstruction and poststructuralist creative writing can inform the design of reflective writing tools for artists. Recognizing that many artists struggle to articulate the intuitive, embodied, and processual dimensions of their creative practice, this study develops a dual-format system: a digital prompt-based web tool and a physical pamphlet output. The design process takes inspiration from poststructuralist creative writing skills such as *fragmentation*, and Derrida's deconstructive concepts such as *binary oppositions* and *différance*, integrating them into both the

structure of writing prompts and the overall information architecture of the web tool. The research proceeds in four main stages:

1. Identifying the Problem Space through secondary and primary research, including blog reviews and artist interviews, to uncover key barriers artists face in writing.
2. Design Iteration, developing three successive tools that embody principles of fragmentation, ambiguity, and nonlinear expression.
3. Final Design, producing a dual-format system—an interactive web tool and a physical pamphlet that artists can use to generate reflective text.
4. Validation, involving a 21-day engagement study with an artist-user, followed by unstructured interviews and qualitative analysis using a single case study approach.

Through iterative prototyping and artist testing, it investigates how hybrid systems combining philosophical concepts, creative writing approaches, and interaction design can foster deeper forms of reflection and communication for contemporary artists.

Chapter 2

Related Works

2.1. Poststructuralist Creative Writing

In the context of poststructuralist thought, creative writing is not merely a method of communication or artistic self-expression. It is a philosophical and material practice that enacts the impossibility of fixed meaning, coherence, or unified identity. It challenges the assumptions of traditional literary forms, especially the dominance of linear narrative, interpretation closure. As Gannon [2] explains, poststructuralist writing “transgresses the imperative to represent the world and its inhabitants as objective and coherent,” instead emphasizing how language itself actively produces and disrupts our experience of the world.

This shift away from fixed interpretation invites a deeper consideration of form as a focal point. In poststructuralist creative writing, form is not decorative. It is a central mechanism through which meaning is deconstructed and reconstructed. Fragmentation, poetic techniques and nonlinearity are not just stylistic innovations but philosophical tools that disrupt the assumptions of text and self. In the following section, I explore three interrelated formal strategies—fragmentation, poetic structure, and sensation that are crucial to poststructuralist creative writing and that inspire my own prompt design strategies for artists.

2.1.1 Fragmentation

Fragmentation is one of the most defining features of poststructuralist creative writing. In contrast to conventional narrative coherence, fragmentation reflects how experience, memory, and identity are discontinuous and unstable. As Gannon [2] observes, poststructuralist texts often take the form of “jagged fragments ... that start again and again, slip away, and interrupt each other.” Fragmenta-

tion becomes a structural strategy for the disrupts of thought and the impossibility of linear understanding.

This aesthetic is deeply rooted in philosophical and cognitive understandings of human consciousness. Krauth [3] connects fragmentation to Walter Benjamin's concept of memory, arguing that thought does not unfold linearly but operates in associative clusters: "the mind's workings are more often like that—disparate bits which we subsequently refashion together to form a mosaicked personal narrative." Rather than presenting events as continuous, fragmented writing acknowledges that experience is recalled and expressed in discontinuous fragments of perception.

Additionally, fragmentation is not about chaos but about inviting the reader into the text as a meaning-maker. Krauth [3] emphasizes that the fragmented form creates textual gaps, which act as interpretive openings: "The writer writes by not writing text, by consciously refraining from filling/explaining/forcing meaning into the gap." This echoes Wolfgang Iser's [4] theory of reader-response, where absence is generative, allowing the audience to participate actively in constructing coherence. As Krauth [3] puts it, "the reader is a co-creator." In this way, fragmentation becomes a strategy that resists authorial control and opens space for readerly agency that can directly inform how I think about prompts design that value ambiguity over clarity.

2.1.2 Poetic Structure and the Strategy of Sensation

In addition to fragmentation, poetic structure is significant to poststructuralist writing. Unlike prose, which tends to prioritize narrative coherence and semantic clarity, poetry engages readers on a sensory and affective level. As Gannon [5] notes, citing Laurel Richardson [6], poetic texts "are emotionally and morally charged" because they use "sound patterns, rhythms, imagery, and page layout" to "concretize emotions, feelings and moods." Poetic structure is thus a strategy not just for artistic beauty, but for thinking and feeling differently.

The poetic disruption of logic and linearity creates space for moments of encounter rather than explanation. Gannon [5] points out that poetic writing "is less linear . . . and in the pauses and gaps can leave moments where readers can insert our own lived experience." In this sense, poetic form creates resonant space not only for interpretation but for emotional and embodied identification. The

text becomes a sensory object, not just a semantic one.

This is directly tied to what Gannon [2] calls the strategy of sensation that operates not only on the level of meaning but also through texture, atmosphere, and affective force. Drawing on Seigworth and Gregg [7], she describes affect as “passages in a field of relays that are erratic, evolving, looping, shimmering.” Writing that enacts sensation resists cognitive sequencing and instead “passes through” bodies and relations. It allows for emotional recognition before intellectual comprehension.

Jackson [8] contributes to this understanding with the idea of tactile poetics, where language is not just read but felt. She writes of “sequined, wooly, stippled” textures, suggesting that words can have material density and can engage the reader’s physical, not just interpretive, faculties. In poststructuralist writing, such sensation is not background or decoration; it is the point to make language feel as much as understood.

To summarize, poetic structure and the strategy of sensation create texts that are immersive, open, and emotionally rich. They do not convey fixed ideas but offer a field of aesthetic encounter. In prompt design, this inspires exercises that encourage writing through image, texture, sound, and disjunction, rather than narrative or argument. Such prompts ask the writer not to express but to evoke, not to explain themselves, but to invite the reader to feel their presence in creating texts.

2.2. Interpretation and Meaning Making

In poststructuralist creative writing, meaning is not transmitted from writer to reader as a fixed essence but is generated through an unfolding process of interpretation. Whether in the act of writing the self or in the engagement between a reader and a text, meaning and identity are seen as relational, provisional, and co-constructed. This view dissolves the boundaries between authorship and reception, positioning both the writing subject and the audience as active participants in meaning-making.

2.2.1 Writing Identity and Its Openness for Interpretation

In poststructural creative writing, identity is not presented as a fixed or unified truth, but as something deliberately open for interpretation rather than declaration. As Gannon [9] puts it, the writing self is “a leaky and unstable subjectivity,” shaped in and by discourse. She insists that “the self both is and is not a fiction; is unified and transcendent and fragmented and always in process of being constituted” [9]. In a word, identity is not expressed as a stable essence, but is performed and made available to interpretation.

This view of selfhood invites a writing practice grounded in multiplicity, contradiction, and incompleteness. Gannon [2] describes her method of “producing multiple versions of the same intimate event to keep its meaning from settling,” a strategy that resists narrative closure and opens space for ambiguity. Rambo Ronai [10] echoes this in her description of poststructural autoethnography as a process of “mimesis and sous rature,” where the self is continually adjusted, erased, and reassembled. These texts do not claim authority over identity but offer “traces of a play of differences for other selves who read to apprehend” [10].

This openness displaces the authorial “I” from the center of meaning. Gannon [2], citing Barthes [11], describes the self in autoethnographic writing as “a discontinuous mutation of sites (like a kaleidoscope)”. Writing becomes a reflective, interpretive space where identity is shaped in relation to real readers. Spry [12] similarly positions identity in writing as “a becoming,” a negotiation between self, language, and audience, where the writer offers not a voice of authority but a textual presence the reader must engage with.

This openness of the writing self directly supports prompt strategies that invite artists to compose identity through fragments, multiples, erasures, and gaps, leaving room for viewers to shape their own understanding of the authorial voice.

2.2.2 Viewers as Co-Creators of Meaning

If identity is offered as an open field, then the role of a reader or viewer is equally reconfigured: not as passive consumer but as a co-author of meaning. Krauth [3] emphasizes that fragmented writers “have always understood that the reader is a co-creator and have written thoughtful towards that outcome.” Drawing on

Iser’s [4] reader-response theory, Krauth [3] notes that “the blank . . . designates a vacancy in the overall system of the text,” which invites the reader to make connections the text only implies.

This collaborative space between text and audience is further elaborated in Caloglou and Polymeris [13], who argue that meaning is produced through a “dynamic dialogic process,” where visual, verbal, and reader-texts are in continuous interplay. In conceptual writing and art, they argue, “the artwork, the accompanying text and the reader-text meet” in an intertextual triangle that “determines the meaning-making process.” [13] This means that the viewer is not interpreting a fixed object, but participating in the text’s becoming.

Even the artist’s intention is decentered in this model. Baldini [14] argues that while intention plays a role, “it cannot constrain [audience] interpretations,” and meaning often “exceeds the boundaries set by intentional readings.” In this sense, poststructural creative writing does not seek to control its meaning, but to unfold it through the reader’s encounter. The text becomes a site not of closure but of conversation.

This idea supports designing prompts that invite interpretive multiplicity, encouraging artists to generate texts that leave openings that ask the reader to complete, resist, or transform the work.

2.3. Creativity Support Tools

In designing tools that encourage creative engagement, Resnick et al. [15] propose twelve foundational principles for developing creativity support tools (CSTs) that support exploration, expression, and learning. These principles emerged from years of experience designing systems like Scratch and LEGO Mindstorms and aimed to make tools not only functional but creatively empowering—helping users to generate, iterate, and reflect on ideas in personally meaningful ways.

The twelve principles include [15]: (1)Support exploration; (2)Low Threshold, High Ceiling, and Wide Walls; (3)Support Many Paths and Many Styles; (4)Support Collaboration; (5)Support Open Interchange; (6)Make It As Simple As Possible - and Maybe Even Simpler; (7)Choose Black Boxes Carefully; (8)Invent Things That You Would Want To Use Yourself; (9)Balance user suggestions,

with observation and participatory processes; (10) Iterate, Iterate - Then Iterate Again; (11) Design for Designers; (12) Evaluation of Tools. Among these, three principles are particularly relevant to the development of my own creative writing tool:

- **Support Exploration:**
Tools should encourage trial and error, letting users make and learn from mistakes without penalty. This principle highlights the importance of encouraging users to experiment, take creative risks, and engage in iterative discovery. It aligns with the goal of helping artists explore hidden thoughts and connections through loosely structured writing prompts.
- **Support Open Interchange:**
Creative tools should facilitate not just solitary expression but also the movement of ideas across platforms, people, and practices. In my tool, this principle motivates features that allow users to revisit, remix, or reinterpret their own previous responses over time.
- **Make It As Simple As Possible – and Maybe Even Simpler:**
Simplicity here is not about minimalism for its own sake, but about removing cognitive friction and foregrounding essential elements that support expression. For my writing tool, this principle translates to a focus on pared-down interfaces that don't distract from the act of reflection.

To understand how digital tools can meaningfully support creative processes, the following subsections examine two case studies that demonstrate different approaches to creativity support tools (CSTs) design: one grounded in reflective writing and cognitive development [16], and the other focused on iterative co-design for professional creative workflows [17]. The systems and development processes of the two case studies are partially aligned with the twelve principles.

2.3.1 Case Study 1: Supporting Cognitive Creativity in Writing

Krishnaraja et al. [16] developed a writing-based creativity support system for university students aimed at supporting core aspects of creative thinking. The

system prompts users to engage in guided journaling and idea generation activities designed to enhance *fluency*, *flexibility*, and *elaboration* [18]. Through a combination of scaffolded prompts, feedback loops, and revision tools, the platform encourages users to explore diverse perspectives and revisit their ideas with increasing complexity over time.

A notable strength of this system lies in its ability to blend structured guidance with open-ended response formats, allowing users to remain anchored while still exercising expressive freedom. The platform also supports longitudinal use, making it possible to observe and build upon one’s own thinking across multiple writing sessions. This model is particularly relevant for the design of my tool, which similarly prompts users to engage with their own artistic practices through writing.

2.3.2 Case Study 2: Designing Intuitive Interfaces for Professional Creators

In a different context, Kim et al. [17] developed the TRENDS system, a creativity support tool designed for automotive designers. Rather than focusing on textual reflection, this tool supports ideation through a visual and spatial interface that allows designers to browse, cluster, and organize inspirational materials.

The design process emphasized “co-conception and iteration”, a methodology that differs from traditional linear workflows or isolated feedback cycles. Instead, conception and evaluation were tightly integrated, enabling users to actively shape system metaphors such as the “Galaxy” [17] interface for idea navigation, visual language, and functional features. For the development of my tool, this case highlights the importance of continuous user involvement—not just as testers, but as co-creators. Moreover, it emphasizes the value of rapid, low-fidelity prototyping to surface hidden needs and refine tool metaphors in response to real use.

The TRENDS case also illustrates how creativity support tools can be tailored to professional workflows without sacrificing intuitive interaction. While the domain differs, the strategy of developing the tool supports complex and affective forms of creativity must be adaptable, participatory, and iterative by design.

Chapter 3

Design

3.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter outlines the practice-led research and iterative design process that shaped the development of a dual-format creative writing tool for artists. Grounded in an exploration of the challenges artists face when writing about their own work, the chapter begins by identifying the problem space through both secondary research—analyzing publicly available artist blogs—and primary research involving semi-structured interviews with practicing artists. These findings inform the design inquiry documented in section 3.2.

Next the chapter traces the evolution of the project through two key stages of prototyping: an initial paper-based prompt sheet documented in section 3.3.1 and a second iteration in the form of a reflective sticker kit documented in section 3.3.2. Each prototype was shaped by theoretical foundation of Derrida’s deconstruction concepts and user feedback.

The chapter concludes with the presentation of the final dual-format system consisting of a digital prompt-based web tool documented in section 3.4.2 and a typographically designed pamphlet documented in section 3.4.3. Together, these components embody a design response that integrates philosophical and literature theory, user-centered research, and interaction design to support artists in articulating their creative practice through open-ended, fragmentary, and reflective writing.

3.2. Identifying the Problem Space

This section outlines the initial phase of the design process, which involved identifying key challenges artists face when writing about their own creative work. Recognizing that these challenges are often complex, subjective, and context-dependent, two complementary methods were employed. First, a review of five artists' blogs was conducted to analyze common difficulties articulated in artistic writing. This secondary research offered insight into recurring thematic challenges across artistic disciplines. Second, informal semi-structured interviews were carried out with three practicing artists—a sound artist, a fine artist and an illustrator—to explore their personal experiences and strategies when engaging in artistic writing. This primary research allowed for a more personal and situated exploration of the artists' lived experiences with writing.

Both phases of research were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis, allowing patterns to emerge from the data itself rather than being imposed in advance [19]. The findings in this stage clarified the problem scope and informed the development of the design concept.

3.2.1 Secondary Research on Artistic Writing Challenges

To better understand the challenges artists encounter when writing about their own creative work, this study conducted a qualitative analysis of five reflective artist blogs. These publicly accessible sources were selected because they offer first-person accounts of the writing process across a range of practices, including visual, performance, and interdisciplinary art. A thematic analysis approach [19] was applied through close reading in order to identify recurring patterns in the texts. This process identified key challenges that eventually inform the development of the design concept.

A recurring theme in the reviewed materials was the difficulty artists face when attempting to articulate intuitive, emotional, or spiritual dimensions of their work. One artist reflected on the difficulty of articulating “vibrations” or subtle inner sensations in concrete terms¹. This reflects that writing is often perceived as in-

¹ Anonymous, *The Challenge of Writing an Artist's Statement That Is Artistic and*

adequate to capture the internal or momentary aspects that are core to artistic thinking. In a related challenge, artists also expressed difficulty in putting bodily reactions into words. For example, one artist likened the act of viewing a Cézanne painting to being “dosed,” a metaphor indicating an intense physical effect that verbal description struggles to convey². These kinds of deeply embodied experiences often resist conventional modes of representation.

Importantly, even artists who are otherwise confident and experienced writers in other context, described feeling hesitant or blocked when writing about their own artwork. For example, Laurie DeVault articulates this challenge in her blog post, stating, “I actually enjoy writing essays, stories, poems, and books myself, and so am not one to shy away from revealing my passions and prejudices. But, when it comes to explaining my art, I am uncharacteristically reticent”³. This suggests that writing about one’s own art may involve a distinct shift of self position that challenges the artist’s sense of voice. Another source framed this difficulty as a tension between two cognitive modes: the intuitive process of making and the analytical demand of explaining. Some artists have reflected on the disconnect between making and writing as a deeper structural tension, where the two modes function oppositional during the whole creative process⁴. However, as Kel-

Deep but Also Makes Sense, blog post, n.d. An editorial reflection on the complexities of crafting meaningful and comprehensible artist statements. Accessed November 20, 2024. <https://ourartsmagazine.com/blog/08/art/the-challenge-of-writing-an-artists-statement-that-is-artistic-and-deep-but-also-makes-sense/>

- 2 Sara Woster, *Why is Writing About Art So Difficult?*, blog post, September 14, 2022. An essay of the challenges involved in translating visual art into language. Accessed November 20, 2024. <https://lithub.com/why-is-writing-about-art-so-difficult/>
- 3 Laurie DeVault, *The Challenges of Writing an Artist’s Statement*, blog post, November 6, 2017. A reflection on the difficulties artists face when articulating their creative processes and inspirations. Accessed November 20, 2024. <https://www.lauriedevault.com/blog/121218/the-challenges-of-writing-an-artists-statement>
- 4 Simo Kellokumpu, *Artist-Researcher and the Challenge of Writing*, in *Dance Arts – Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Practices*, Theatre Academy University of the Arts Helsinki. An essay of the disconnect between artistic practice and scholarly writing. Accessed November 20, 2024. <https://disco.teak.fi/tanssin-historia/en/artist-researcher-and-the-challenge-of-writing/>

lokumpu⁵ argues, “It is fruitful to consider the relationship between the written text and the material artistic practice as a reciprocal process, rather than as an opposition”, suggesting such divide is not inevitable.

Odazhiev⁶ deepens this perspective by pointing to the specific challenge of describing the act of making art in a way that resonates with one’s own experience, noting that “the author is highlighting the difficulty of writing about the act of painting, specifically doing so in a way to make it relatable to a painter; If the artist knows most closely what he or she has made, they may still not have access to the words needed to describe that”. This underscores the gap between internal knowledge and external articulation, and the difficulty of transforming an intuitive process into precise language. This challenge further reinforces the need for writing approaches that are more compatible with the non-linear and embodied nature of creative practice.

Taken together, these themes illustrate that the writing challenges artists face are not simply technical or motivational, but deeply conceptual and structural. They reveal a broader misalignment between traditional modes of writing and the creative logic embedded in artistic practice. These insights shaped the initial problem framing for this research and informed the development of the design concept that intended to support more intuitive and open-ended approaches to writing.

3.2.2 Primary Artist Research: Interview

To complement the findings from the secondary research, this study conducted semi-structured interviews with three practicing artists—one working in sound, one working in fine art and the other in illustration. These interviews aimed to uncover personal insights into the challenges of writing about one’s own creative work. The interviews were guided by open-ended questions but allowed for fluid

5 Ibid.

6 Petar Odazhiev, *Challenges in Writing on Art*, blog post, March 29, 2024. A reflective essay on the limitations of language in describing visual experience and interpretive subjectivity. Accessed November 20, 2024. https://www.petarodazhiev.com/gradina/challenges-in-writing-on-art?utm_source=chatgpt.com

dialogue and follow-up questions, following the format of semi-structured interviewing as outlined by Adams W C [20].

The interview data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis, guided by the inductive thematic approach outlined by Zhang and Wildemuth [19]. Following the process described by Zhang and Wildemuth [19], the analysis involved identifying units of meaning, generating initial codes, and grouping these into broader thematic categories through iterative comparison. A summary of the thematic codes, description and example quotes is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Thematic Coding Matrix of Interview Excerpts

Theme/Code	Description	Example Excerpts
Difficulty finding the right words	Artists struggle to verbalize their ideas or find words that match their intended feeling or concept.	“struggle to find feelings that relate”
Text as limitation	Concerns that textual descriptions may misrepresent or limit interpretation of their artwork.	“let my art do the talking”
Use of tools and templates	Use of templates, online references, or tools like AI to support writing tasks.	“sometimes I use AI...”
Context-dependent writing	Variation in writing style and depth depending on the target audience or context.	“if you’re trying to spark a conversation, or you’re trying to articulate a point of view.”
Tension between structure and creativity	Artists experience a conflict between following institutional writing formats and maintaining personal expression.	“basically there’s just a more fixed structure to write in, and really just doesn’t have that much freedom for me”
Textual reflection as creative method	Writing is used as a reflective, embodied, or spatial process that shapes the creation or understanding of the artwork.	“A non-linear, more spatial kind of text that is very helpful to me.”

The analysis revealed several recurring themes across participants, the most principle of which were: (1) difficulty in finding the right words; (2) perceived limitations of text; (3) use of tools and templates to support writing; (4) context-

Interview Questions Sheet	
General	[1] Can you describe your process for creating texts for exhibitions or portfolios? [2] How do you decide what to include in these texts
User Needs	[3] What challenges, if any, do you face when writing about your artwork? [4] What do you think makes a good exhibition or portfolio text? [5] Do you ever feel that the texts for your work fully reflect your artistic intent? Why or why not?
Current Tools	[6] Do you use any tools, templates, or assistance to help you write texts? If so, how do they help?
About Reflections	[7] Do you think writing about your work influences your creative process? If yes, how? [8] What's your experience with writing texts for different audiences, such as curators, collectors, or the public? [9] What emotions do you associate with writing about your work (e.g., confidence, frustration, satisfaction)?

(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 3.1 First Interview Questions Sheet

dependent writing; (5) tension between standardized writing formats and personal voice; and (6) writing as a reflective and embodied practice. Theme(1) and (2) were consistently present across all three interviews, indicating shared struggles among artists in articulating their work through language. The remaining themes, including theme(5) and (6) appeared solely in the sound artist’s account, suggesting they may be influenced by personal practice or artistic discipline.

One of the most prominent challenges discussed by participants was the struggle to articulate artistic ideas through language. All artists described frustration with the inability of words to fully capture the emotional or conceptual depth of their work. As one artist remarked, “I can’t express my thoughts well in words”⁷, reflecting a broader sense that linguistic expression often flattens abstract and intuitive dimensions of creative practice. Similarly, another artist described the challenge of finding words that could resonate emotionally with viewers, noting that she “struggles to find feelings that relate to the audience”⁸.

This difficulty with verbal articulation was frequently accompanied by concerns that writing might constrain meaning or misrepresent the artist’s intent. Artists noted that institutional writing formats, such as grant applications or academic submissions, often impose rigid structural that limit space for personal or experimental expression. One artist remarked that writing felt like “a skeleton”⁹, suggesting it functioned as a necessary yet insufficient framework when compared to the affective richness of the artwork itself. Across the interviews, all participants expressed a desire to “let the artwork speak for itself”¹⁰ and resisted the perceived pressure to provide explanatory text. Sound artist explicitly avoided using captions or statements in exhibition settings, fearing that these might lead

7 Interview with fine artist, conducted by the author, December 2024, transcript held by the author.

8 Interview with illustrator, conducted by the author, December 2024, transcript held by the author.

9 Interview with fine artist, conducted by the author, December 2024, transcript held by the author.

10 Interview with sound artist, conducted by the author, December 2024, transcript held by the author. Although this quote is from the sound artist, all participants expressed similar views on this theme.

viewers to approach the work with fixed interpretations. All these statements reveal a broader tension between the demands of a writing framework and the artist’s desire to preserve openness and ambiguity in the articulation of their work.

These findings played a critical role in shaping the design orientation of this project. Specifically, they underscore the need for alternative writing tools and frameworks that move away from formulaic, prescriptive modes and instead support nonlinear and open-ended exploration with text.

3.3. Design Iteration

3.3.1 First Prototype: Paper-Based Prompts

Deconstructive Strategies

This section draws out four strategies from Derrida’s *deconstruction* that directly inform the design of the paper-based prompt tool. These strategies, (1)Identifying Binary Oppositions, (2)Reversing Hierarchies, (3)Foregrounding the Marginal, and (4)Attending to Trace and Absence, serve as theoretical grounding in the formulation of the prompts that artists can use to critically engage with their own creative processes.

Strategy 1: Identifying Binary Oppositions

Deconstruction begins by making visible the binary structures that organize language and meaning, such as mind/body, theory/practice, or form/content. As Derrida explains, these binaries are not neutral: they often privilege one side while suppressing the other [21]. In artistic practice, such binaries may unconsciously shape how artists perceive their own work. Prompts derived from this strategy ask artists to identify the oppositions present in their thinking and consider how they might dissent them.

Strategy 2: Reversing Hierarchies

Following the identification of binaries, deconstruction often proceeds by reversing the identified hierarchy. For example, instead of treating *concept* as superior to *material*, or *meaning* as prior to *form*, artists are invited to prioritize what is normally subordinated. This echoes Derrida’s call to “dismantle” hierarchies and

attend to the logic of the excluded [22]. In prompt design, this might take the shape of inviting artists to reverse the identified binaries to gain a totally different perspective of *seeing* their artworks.

Strategy 3: Foregrounding the Marginal

A further step involves not just reversing hierarchies, but highlighting what has been marginalized. As Jonathan Culler writes, deconstruction seeks out “what has been excluded or repressed” as a way of unsettling dominant narratives [23]. In the context of the prompt tool, this means inviting attention to the gaps, contradictions, or background elements within the work that may carry unexpected expressive weight. This strategy opens up space for ignored elements to emerge.

Strategy 4: Attending to Trace and Absence

Finally, deconstruction insists that every act of expression contains the *trace* of what is not said. Derrida describes the trace as a kind of ghostly presence—“the mark of the absence of a presence” [24]. This suggests that what is missing or hiding in a work, either a material, a color or a voice, can be just as meaningful as what is made present. Prompts that draw on this strategy ask artists to reflect on what is absent or hidden, and how this nonpresence still shapes the work’s meaning and form.

Together, these four strategies form the theoretical and backbone of the prompt design. These prompts aim to guide artist to embrace contradictions, instability, and multiplicity in writing about art.

Design of The Paper-Based Prompt Tool

The first iteration of the writing prompt tool took the form of a printed paper. Rather than following a fixed sequence, the prompts were arranged into modular sections that users could enter at any point. The underlying logic of the tool was informed by the four deconstructive strategies outlined in the previous section.

The tool was structured into four main sections: Introduction, Formal Artistic Elements, Identifying Artistic Elements, and Deconstructive Prompts for Reflection. The Introduction briefly oriented users to the purpose of the tool, emphasizing that the prompts were not evaluative or prescriptive, but intended to facilitate personal insight and experimentation with language.

The section on Formal Artistic Elements was influenced by Mariusz Stanowski’s

Introduction This tool is designed to help you deeply engage with your creative process by provoking prompts inspired by Derrida's deconstruction. It begins by guiding you to identify the key elements of your work—such as materials, techniques, and themes—and then uses carefully crafted prompts to challenge assumptions, explore alternatives, and spark new ideas. Whether you're feeling stuck or simply seeking fresh perspectives, this tool provides a structured yet flexible approach to rethink and evolve your artistic practice. Use this tool as a space for self-dialogue and documenting your artistic journey. Remember, It's not about finding the "right" answers but about allowing contradictions, fragments, and unresolved thoughts to surface. Formal Artistic Elements • Visual Elements: Line, shape, color, texture, space, light, shadow, etc. • Material Choices: Paint, canvas, found objects, digital tools, etc. • Techniques: Brushwork, layering, assemblage, digital rendering, etc. • Compositional Structure: Balance, symmetry, rhythm, focus points, etc. • Conceptual Themes: Subject matter, narrative, symbolism, meaning, etc. Identifying Artistic Elements • "What materials and techniques am I using, and why?" • "What visual elements dominate the composition?" • "What ideas, symbols, or themes drive this piece?"	• "What compositional choices have I made (e.g., symmetry, focus, perspective)?" Deconstructive Prompts for Reflection Starting a New Project • "Are there opposites or binaries in my concept (e.g., light/dark, abstract/realistic)? How can I merge or blur them?" • "What materials or techniques feel most obvious? What's an unconventional choice I could consider instead?" • "What elements are typically overlooked in works like this? Can I bring them into focus?" • "How does the absence of something (e.g., a color, form, or idea) influence the direction of my work?" Process Reflection • "What element feels dominant in my work right now? What happens if I shift focus to something less obvious?" • "What hierarchies (e.g., figure/ground, foreground/background) exist in my composition? What can I do with them, reverse them, equalize them or?" • "What's present in the background—both literally and conceptually? What happens if I bring it to the foreground?" Review • "What binaries or hierarchies shaped this piece? Did I challenge them effectively?" • "How did changing one element affect the overall work?" • "Did any new ideas or directions emerge that I hadn't considered before?" • "What worked well, and what felt challenging or uncomfortable?"
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(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.2 The Paper-Based Prompt

concept of *pure painting*, which proposes a synthesis of visual, material and conceptual elements as formal artistic elements [25]. Stanowski argues that by abstracting these elements from their traditional context, it removes the utilitarian functions of these elements and transform them into pure forms [25]. This process aligns with Derrida’s deconstruction, treating all elements as equally valid components of a new creative process. Following this, the section on Identifying Artistic Elements builds directly on the previous focus on formal artistic elements, guiding artists to actively engage with and rethink those elements through a deconstructive strategy.

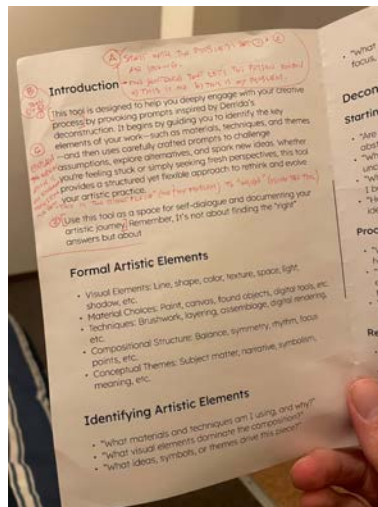
The last section, Deconstructive Prompts for Reflection, was divided into three user scenarios: Starting a New Project, Process Reflection, and Review. Each scenario applied deconstructive strategies—such as Identifying Binary Oppositions, Reversing Hierarchies, and Attending to Trace—into specific reflective exercises. For instance, in the Starting a New Project subsection, one prompt asked: “What materials or techniques feel most obvious? What’s an unconventional choice I could consider instead?” is a prompt derived from the strategy of Reversing Hierarchies. Another prompt, grounded in the strategy of Attending to Trace, asked: “How does the absence of something (e.g., a color, form, or idea) influence the direction of your work?”

Artist User Test and Feedback

To evaluate the initial effectiveness and usability of the paper-based prompt prototype, a user test was conducted with one practicing fine artist who maintains a regular writing habit as part of his creative process. The purpose of the test was to observe how an experienced artist interacts with the tool and to identify any limitations in his interactions.

Two main areas of feedback emerged from the test. First, the artist noted a limited sense of engagement, emphasizing that the static format of the A4 paper did not support interaction or responsiveness. The fixed layout and passive delivery of the prompts made it difficult for the participant to feel immersed in the process. As he noted, the lack of dynamic interaction reduced his motivation to reflect deeply.

Second, the artist highlighted the absence of visual aesthetics, particularly noted



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.3 User Test of the Paper-Based Prompt

that visual elements marked a significant position in most artists' practices. The plain and text-heavy A4 layout was perceived as mismatched with the creative richness of artistic work.

Together, these insights indicated the need to move beyond static paper formats and explore more interactive and visually engaging formats while informed the development of the second design iteration.

3.3.2 Second Prototype: A Reflective Sticker Kit

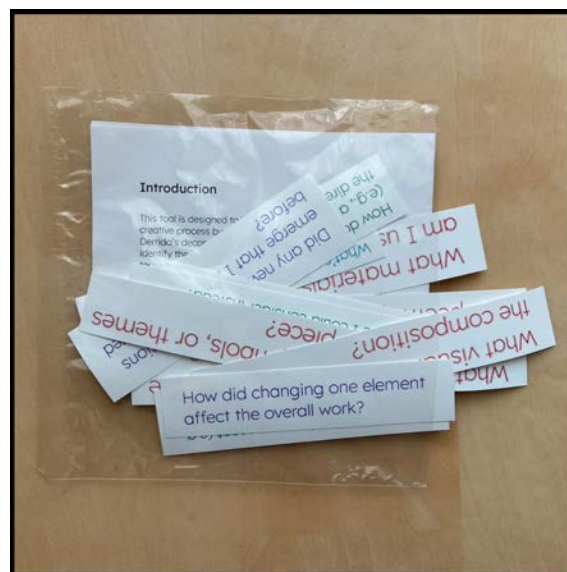
Design of the Reflective Sticker Kit

Building on insights gained from the first prototype, the second iteration of the prompt tool was developed as a Reflective Sticker Kit. This design aimed to address two key limitations identified in the previous format: lack of interactivity and the absence of visual or material engagement. By translating each writing prompt into a physical sticker, the tool invites a more tactile and spatial mode of interaction.

Unlike the paper-based prototype, which presented prompts in fixed thematic sections, the sticker kit deliberately dismantles these structures. Each sticker

carries a single prompt without indicating its original section or category, thus encouraging non-linear engagement. This format allows artists to approach the prompts intuitively, selecting those that resonate with their current state, questions, or projects.

To guide artists in adapting the tool to their own workflows, a small folded instruction sheet accompanies the kit. This insert outlines three suggested scenarios of engagement. The first, visual mapping, invites artists to lay out prompts spatially on a wall, board, or large page, creating a visual mapping that reflects their thinking or creative trajectory. The second, art journaling, encourages the use of prompts within sketchbooks or journals, allowing artists to write, draw, or collage in response to the stickers directly on the page. The third scenario, workspace reminder, positions the prompts as ambient stimuli; artists are invited to place them on easels, walls, or tools as visual reminders that remain present throughout their creative process.



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.4 The Reflective Sticker Kit

Artist User Test and Feedback

To evaluate the Reflective Sticker Kit’s usability and resonance with creative practice, a one-week user study was conducted with a practicing installation artist. The aim was to understand how the tool might be integrated into an artist’s creative process.

The methodological approach combined semi-structured interviews with photo elicitation. As Racadio et al. explain, photo elicitation involves participants capturing or selecting images which are then used as focal points in subsequent interviews [26]. In this study, the artist was asked to take photographs of where and how the stickers were used, including sketchbooks, studio walls, or tools. No restrictions were placed on frequency or manner of use, in order to encourage natural engagement and self-directed exploration. After this period, a semi-structured interview was conducted, during which the photographs were used as visual prompts to elicit detailed reflections on the artist’s engagement with the sticker kit.

The one-week test with a practicing installation artist produced rich insights into how the Reflective Sticker Kit functioned in real-world creative contexts. The artist incorporated the kit into the early ideation phase of a new project concerning personal memory and ancestral connection—specifically, a conceptual exploration of her grandfather and the banyan tree. Over four consecutive days, she used the stickers alongside mind mapping, a method she was already familiar with, to visually structure emerging ideas.

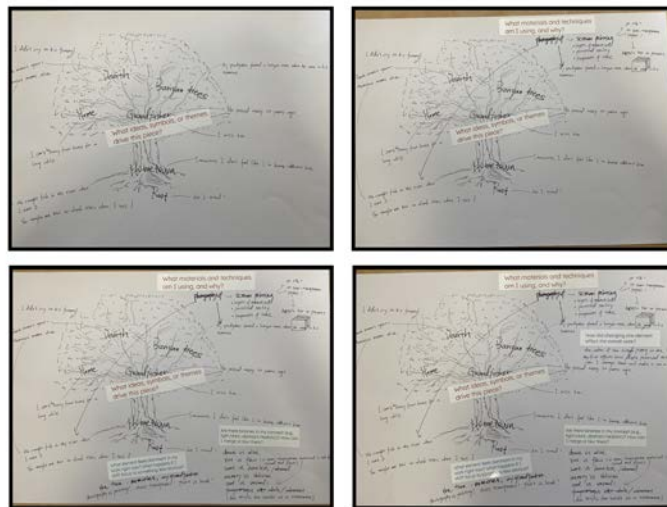
Overall, the artist’s feedback pointed to a mixed but constructive engagement with the tool. While she did not find any particular prompt “impressive,” she noted that certain prompts facilitated a deepening progression of thought, especially when used consecutively. Prompts such as “What elements feel dominant in my work right now? What happens if I shift focus to something less obvious?” encouraged her to rethink both conceptual focal points and material choices. Another prompt “How did changing one element affect the overall work?” led her to reconsider the sequencing of screen prints in her acrylic display box and explore alternatives such as projection or video documentation. These examples demonstrate that the prompts can serve as catalysts for conceptual shifts and experimentation within the creative process.

However, the artist also emphasized that the tool primarily stimulated her ra-

Interview Questions Sheet	
Engagement	[1] Can you describe how you used the Reflective Sticker Kit during the past week? [2] Were there specific prompts you felt more drawn to? Why those ones? [3] Did the format (stickers instead of paper) influence your willingness to engage? How so?
Impacts	[4] Did any of the prompts help you reflect differently on your creative process or artwork? [5] Did it feel like the prompts supported your intuitive or emotional thinking? [6] Did using the stickers influence how you approached your creative work this week?
Opportunities	[7] Did you find any use for the kit beyond what was suggested (e.g., journaling, workspace inspiration)? [8] What would you change or improve in the next iteration of this sticker kit? [9] Do you think this type of reflective tool has value for other artists? Why or why not?

(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 3.5 Interview Questions Sheet For Use of the Reflective Sticker Kit



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.6 Documentation of Artist Using The Sticker Kit

tional and analytical faculties, rather than intuitive or emotional thinking. She described the prompts as more effective in “activating thinking” than in channeling embodied or felt experience. This distinction is significant, particularly given that many artistic decisions are grounded in non-verbal, experiential knowledge rather than deductive reasoning. As such, the kit may be more effective when positioned as a reflection-in-thinking rather than reflection-in-action tool, functioning best at specific stages of the creative cycle, such as early ideation or post-compositional review rather than during immersive making.

Regarding the form factor, the artist strongly preferred stickers over traditional paper-based prompts. Unlike the previously shared paper version, which felt awkward and disengaging, the stickers allowed for selective, tactile interaction, and could be embedded within the physical act of sketching or mind mapping. Yet she also questioned whether stickers were the “best possible format,” noting that for artists who work more intuitively and less verbally might still feel intellectually imposed or outside their natural creative flow.

When asked about the broader applicability of the kit, the artist suggested it might be particularly valuable for student artists or emerging practitioners, who

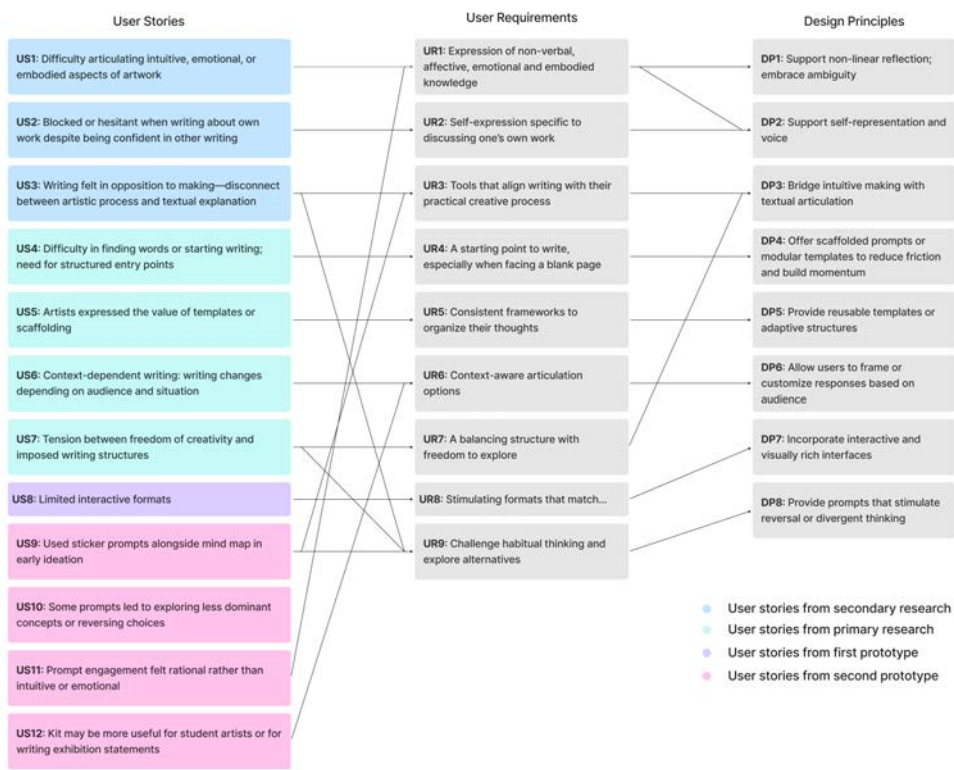
may benefit from structured opportunities to explore material and conceptual alternatives. In contrast, she expressed doubt about its usefulness for more established artists with well-formed creative processes, unless positioned as a tool to help them articulate ideas for exhibition texts, statements, or public engagement. She also noted a potential disconnect between the prompt structure and the flow-oriented, experiential nature of mature artistic production. This feedback calls attention to the need for more targeted, user-sensitive design depending on an artist's stage, context, and reflective habits.

3.3.3 Synthesis of Insights

The synthesis of user data across secondary research, primary interviews, and two rounds of prototyping reveals a complex set of needs that creative practitioners face when engaging in reflective or explanatory writing about their work. These needs were organized into nine user requirements **UR1–UR9**, which in turn inform eight design principles **DP1–DP8** for future tool development:

1. DP1: Support non-linear reflection; embrace ambiguity
2. DP2: Support self-representation and voice
3. DP3: Bridge intuitive making with textual articulation
4. DP4: Offer scaffolded prompts or modular templates to reduce friction and build momentum
5. DP5: Provide reusable templates or adaptive structures
6. DP6: Allow users to frame or customize responses based on audience
7. DP7: Incorporate interactive and visually rich interfaces
8. DP8: Provide prompts that stimulate reversal or divergent thinking

There are several patterns of insights emerging from the collected data:



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 3.7 Overall Design Thinking Process From Gathering Requirements to Deriving Design Principles

- **Emotional and Embodied Expression Is Often Underserved by Writing Tools**
Multiple user stories US1, US2, US11 highlighted the difficulty artists experience in articulating intuitive, emotional, or embodied aspects of their work. While artists are often comfortable with visual or material expression, translating this into words especially in reflective or explanatory formats can feel limiting. This points to the need for tools that support emotional and sensory dimensions of reflection UR1 and UR2. Correspondingly, DP1 and DP2 emphasize the importance of non-linear, intuitive prompts and voice-affirming interfaces that validate diverse ways of thinking and speaking.
- **There Is a Disconnection Between Art Making and Writing**
User stories such as US3 and US9 indicate that for many practitioners, writing feels disconnected from the creative process, either because it comes too late, feels externally imposed, or operates in a different cognitive mode. These insights suggest that tools should better integrate with the making process UR3, enabling artists to think through writing in tandem with material or visual exploration. DP3 responds to this by calling for hybrid design strategies that merge textual and creative workflows.
- **Artistic Writing Seeks a Balance Between Structure and Freedom**
Tension emerged in US7 and US11 between the desire for creative openness and the need for some degree of structure to make reflection manageable. Tools that are too rigid feel constraining; those too open-ended can lead to avoidance. UR7 and its corresponding DP7 suggest that designs should allow users to modulate their engagement, choosing levels of structure that match their needs, experience, and mood.
- **Artistic Writing Is Contextual and Audience-Dependent**
Insights from US6 and US12 emphasize that artists often write for specific audiences, such as curators, funding panels, or peers, and must shift their language and emphasis accordingly (UR6). This signals the need for tools that support context-aware articulation, addressed by DP6 through design.
- **Interactivity and Visual Engagement Matter**
Feedback from the first prototype US8 indicated that static and purely tex-

tual formats feel disengaging, especially for visually-oriented practitioners. Participants responded more positively to visually engaging tools, such as stickers used in combination with sketchbooks, than paper-based prompts. UR8 therefore emphasizes the need for stimulating, engagement-friendly formats, supported by DP7's call for interactive and rich interfaces.

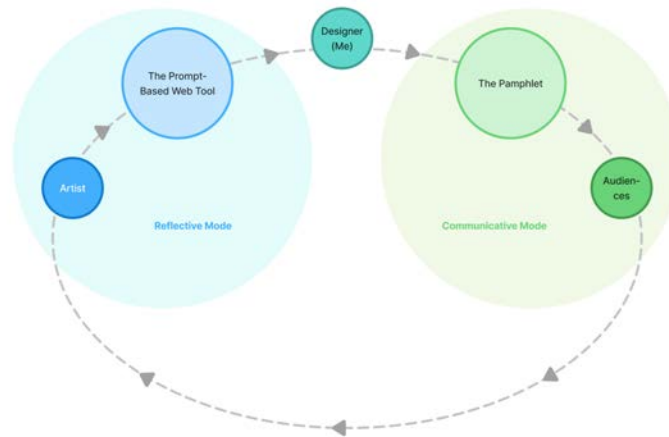
3.4. Final Design

3.4.1 Design Objectives

The final design stage aimed to synthesize the insights gathered throughout the earlier phases into a dual-format system for reflective artistic writing and communication. This dual-format design consists of a digital web tool and a physical pamphlet, which together are conceived to support both internal reflection and external expression. As illustrated in figure 3.8, the web tool operates in the Reflective Mode, offering a digital space where the artist can engage with prompts and produce intuitive, fragmented, and poetic responses. The pamphlet functions in the Communicative Mode, translating these written reflections into a tangible, shareable form suitable for audience interaction and collaborative contexts.

Ideally, the pamphlet serves as an extension of the web tool's print functionality. The envisioned system includes a database that archives user-generated content over time. This database would support a generative AI engine capable of analyzing past writings to extract thematic threads or recurring keywords. These would then be composed into visual-typographic structures, creating custom-designed pamphlets that embody the artist's voice and writing history. Although this feature could not be technically implemented in the current prototype, a manually designed pamphlet was developed to simulate the intended communicative role and was evaluated through user validation, as discussed in Chapter 4.

Inspired by poststructuralist creative writing skills from section 2.1 and Derrida's deconstructive strategies from section 3.3.1, the design prioritizes fragmentation, poetic structure, and textual layering to accommodate nonlinear, affective, and intuitive modes of artistic writing in alignment with DP1. Two key objectives structured the design process:



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 3.8 Reflective-Communicative Circulation of the Dual-Format System

1. Support Internal and Affective Artistic Writing

The tool is designed to support artists in accessing the tacit, affective, and often ineffable aspects of their practice through fragmentary writing. Rather than functioning as a rigid template, the prompts invite nonlinear, poetic, and interpretive responses that align with the poststructuralist notion of writing as a performative and meaning-making act while supporting DP2. By enabling artists to write in fragments, the tool aims to encourage authentic insights to emerge from the act of writing itself. Writing becomes not merely descriptive, but constitutive—a way for the artist to externalize evolving thought processes and trace connections between material form, conceptual intent, and subjective experience through DP3.

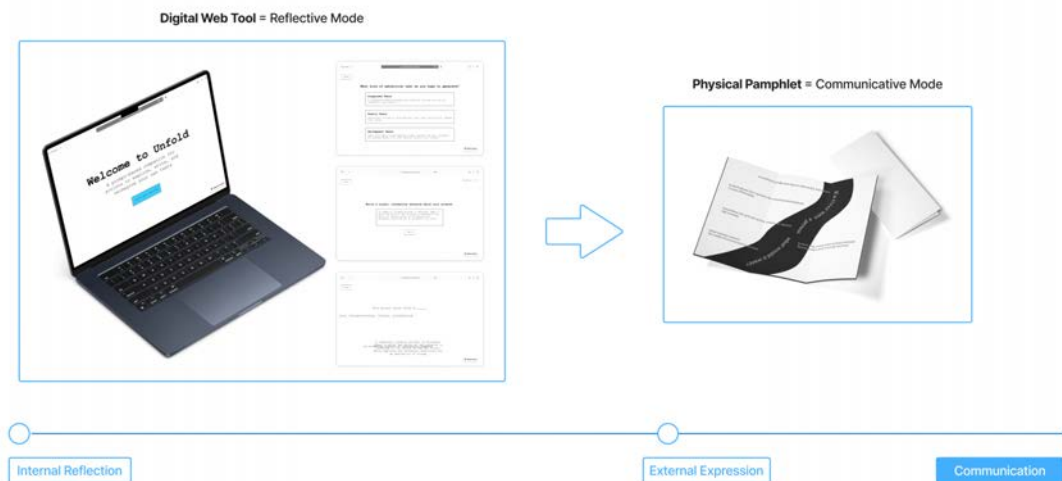
2. Facilitate Communication and Circulation of Reflective Writing

A central aim of the final design is to function not only as an individual reflective tool but as a dynamic system that circulates across artists and audiences. Through its physical output—the pamphlet—the tool aims to facilitate dialogical exchanges between artists and audiences, and establish a system of circulation, where reflection, creation, and interpretation are distributed across actors, and where writing becomes a broader ambition to shift from private documentation

to shared meaning-making in collaborative or curatorial settings.

3.4.2 Unfold: A Prompt-Based Web Tool

The digital web tool, Unfold¹¹, was developed as the core component of a dual-format system designed to support reflective, affective, and experimental writing practices for artists. It integrates three key dimensions: (1) writing modes grounded in poststructuralist creative strategies to invite fragmentary, poetic, and layered expression; (2) interaction design principles that foster an intuitive and emotionally attuned user journey; (3) display functions that enable the writing to be experienced in dynamic, performative, and potentially exhibition-ready forms; and (4) a vision for automated print output, wherein the artist's writings are stored, analyzed, and transformed into visually designed pamphlets.



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 3.9 Design Components

¹¹ The tool is available at: <https://unfoldtext.framer.website>, accessed June 19, 2025

Writing Modes: Dispersed, Poetic, and Palimpsest

The web tool applies poststructuralist creative writing strategies not only in the level of prompt design, but also in the architecture of the system itself. Drawing on theoretical foundations such as fragmentation, poetic structures mentioned in section 2.2, and deconstructive strategies mentioned in section 3.3.1, the three writing modes integrated into the web tool—Dispersed, Poetic, and Palimpsest—aims to turn key poststructuralist concepts into practical, interactive formats following DP7 and DP8. Rather than applying a singular narrative or explanatory framework, the web tool opens up multiple stylistic and cognitive entry points for reflection in accordance with DP4.

- Dispersed Texts

Fragmentation forms the logic behind this mode, allowing each sentence to stand independently, mirroring the fragmentary yet interconnected thinking often present in artistic reflection. As noted in creative writing literature, fragmentation resists closure and invites multiple interpretive pathways, offering “non-sequential bursts of thought that accumulate meaning through their arrangement” [3] while embodying DP1.

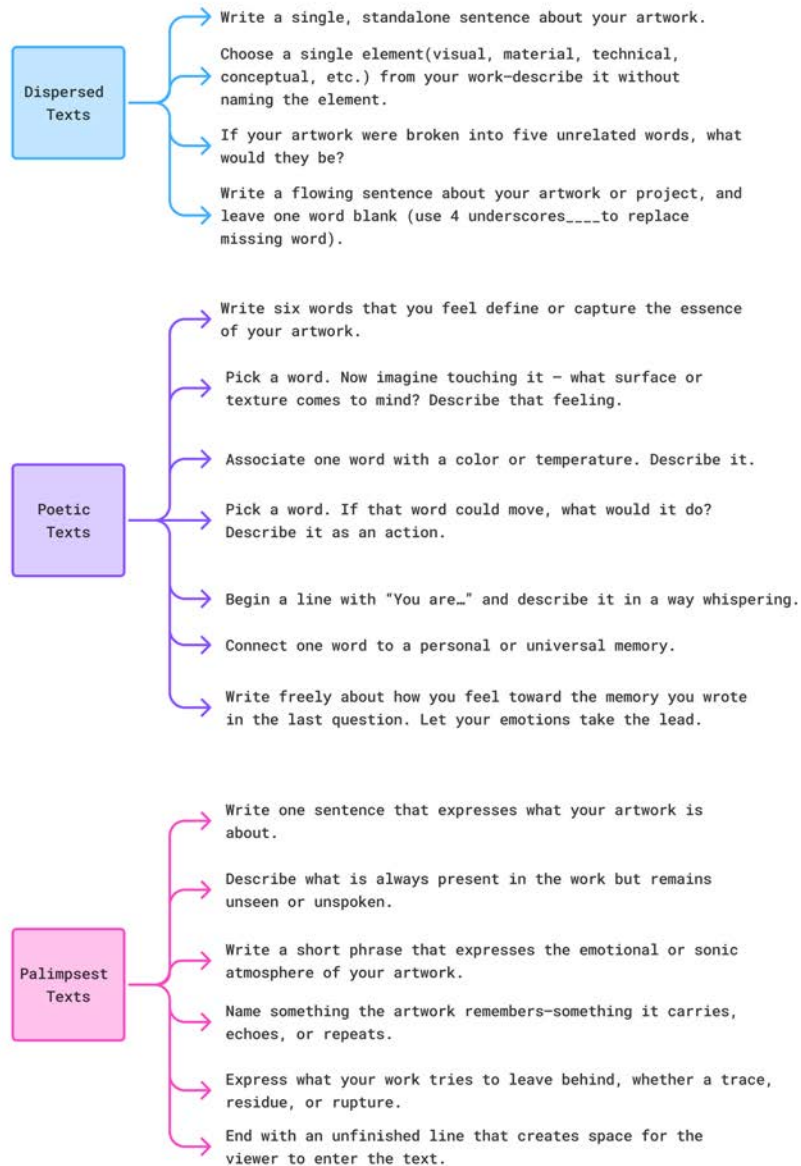
- Poetic Texts

This mode draws on the poetic structure and sensory logic of poststructuralist writing. Users respond in abstract, emotional, and intuitive language. This aligns with Gannon’s [9] call for writing that “passes through” bodies and sensations rather than simply representing thought. The prompts here encourage affective exploration, emotional tone, and rhythm.

- Palimpsest Texts

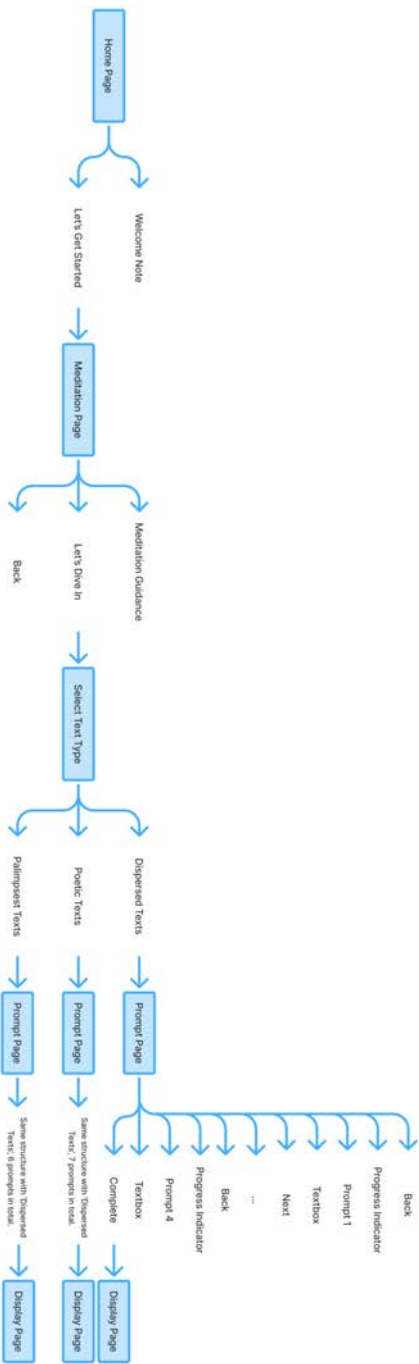
Inspired by Derrida’s concept of *différance*, this mode allows past responses to linger beneath newer ones, revealing the temporal instability of meaning. The layering of text creates a visible history of shifts, contradictions, and re-statements, foregrounding writing as a temporal and recursive act [27] while implementing DP8.

Prompts of the Three Writing Modes



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 3.10 Prompts of the Three Writing Modes



(Source: Processed Data)

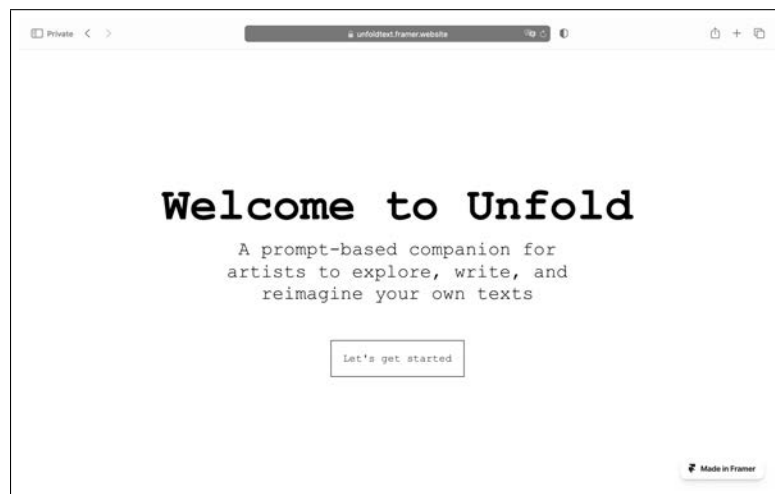
Figure 3.11 Information Architecture of the Website *Unfold*

Interface and Experience Design

In addition to content, the interface design was developed to enhance the affective and immersive conditions for reflective writing through DP7.

Based on user feedback from previous iterations, a meditation page was introduced before prompt selection, offering artists a moment of pause to “clear up my mind” as one participant described it. This pre-writing ritual responds to findings in UX research showing that mood framing and pre-engagement cues can significantly shape digital writing behaviors [28].

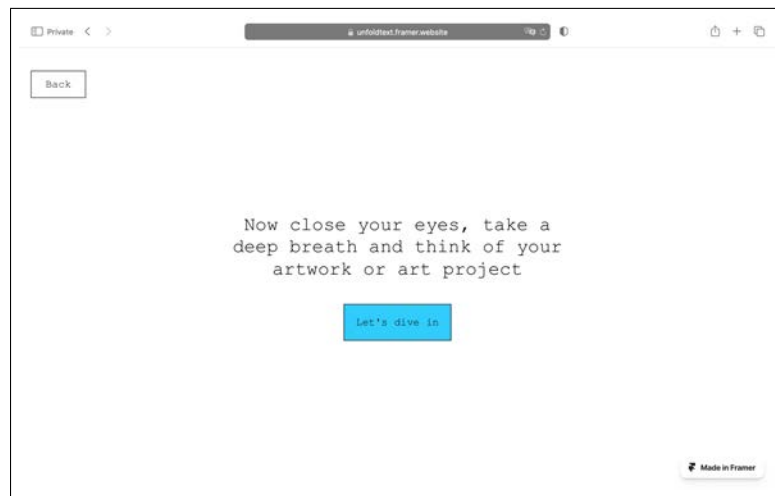
Interactive elements were refined to foster immersion. The “Let’s Get Started” and “Let’s Dive In” buttons were designed with hover-responsive color changes, turning blue when engaged to provide subtle feedback and visual reassurance during navigation. This aligns with interface best practices that emphasize micro-interactions for user engagement [29].



(Source: Author’s Archive)

Figure 3.12 Welcome Page of Unfold

Further, a progress indicator was embedded into the prompt interface to help users track their journey across multiple questions guided by DP4. This design decision was directly informed by user feedback noting uncertainty in how many steps remained. The indicator helps reduce cognitive load and fosters a narrative sense of movement through reflection.



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.13 Meditation Page of Unfold



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.14 Select-Text-Mode Page of Unfold



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.15 Prompt Page of Unfold

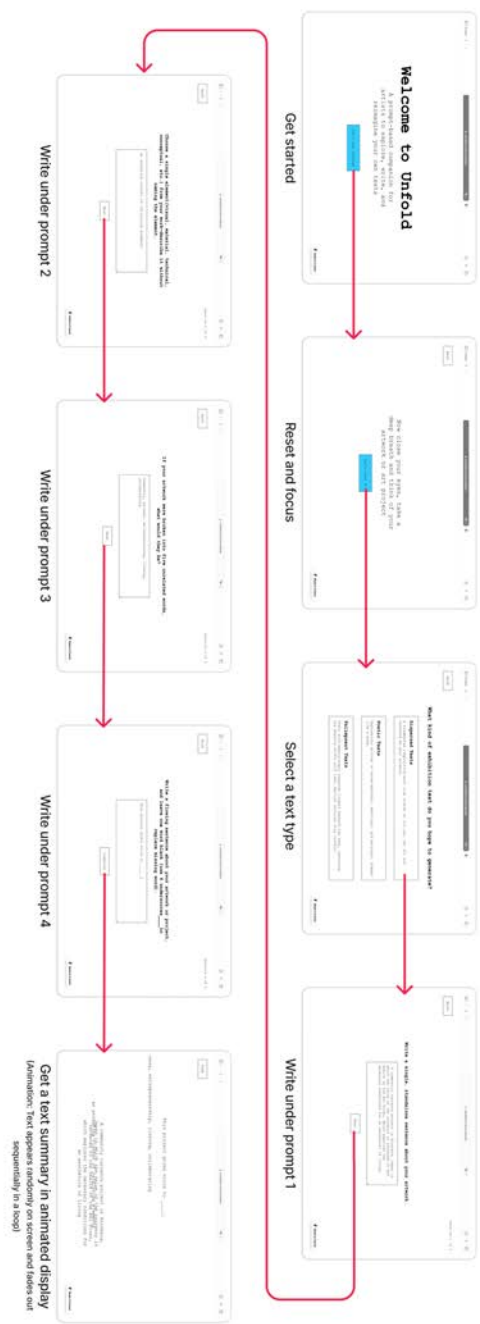
Another key feature of the interaction design is the system's ability to remember user input across navigation steps. If users return to a previous prompt to revise their response, their earlier answer is automatically saved and displayed in the text box guided by DP4. This design choice aligns with principles of continuity in user experience design, which emphasize the importance of preserving user progress to reduce cognitive load and foster a sense of control [30].

Overall, the web tool is structured into four core feature groups that guide the artist through a reflective writing journey, see Figure 3.16. The Get Ready features group includes a welcome page and a meditation page, designed to help users mentally transition into a focused, creative state. The Prompt Writing features group consists of the Select Text Mode page, offering Dispersed, Poetic, or Palimpsest modes, and the prompt pages where users respond to structured, open-ended cues. The Display features group visually animates the response texts in different styles aligned with each mode, providing an expressive and dynamic reading experience. Finally, the Print features group allows users to export their writing as a PDF format, currently available only in the Poetic mode due to its non-animated display.



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 3.16 Features Groups of the Web Tool



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 3.17 User Flow of the Dispersed Texts

Display Functions

After the step-by-step prompt writing, the tool translates the text into a dynamic display interface, designed to be used as an exhibition text or communication artifact incorporating DP6 and DP7. Each writing mode corresponds to a distinct display logic that enhances its interpretive potential.

For Dispersed Texts, individual lines appear randomly on the screen, fading in and out in looped sequences. This dynamic layout mimics the poetic unpredictability of fragmented thought, foregrounding the intervals and silences between statements embodying DP1. The screen does not present a “final” narrative, but an evolving sequences of thoughts.

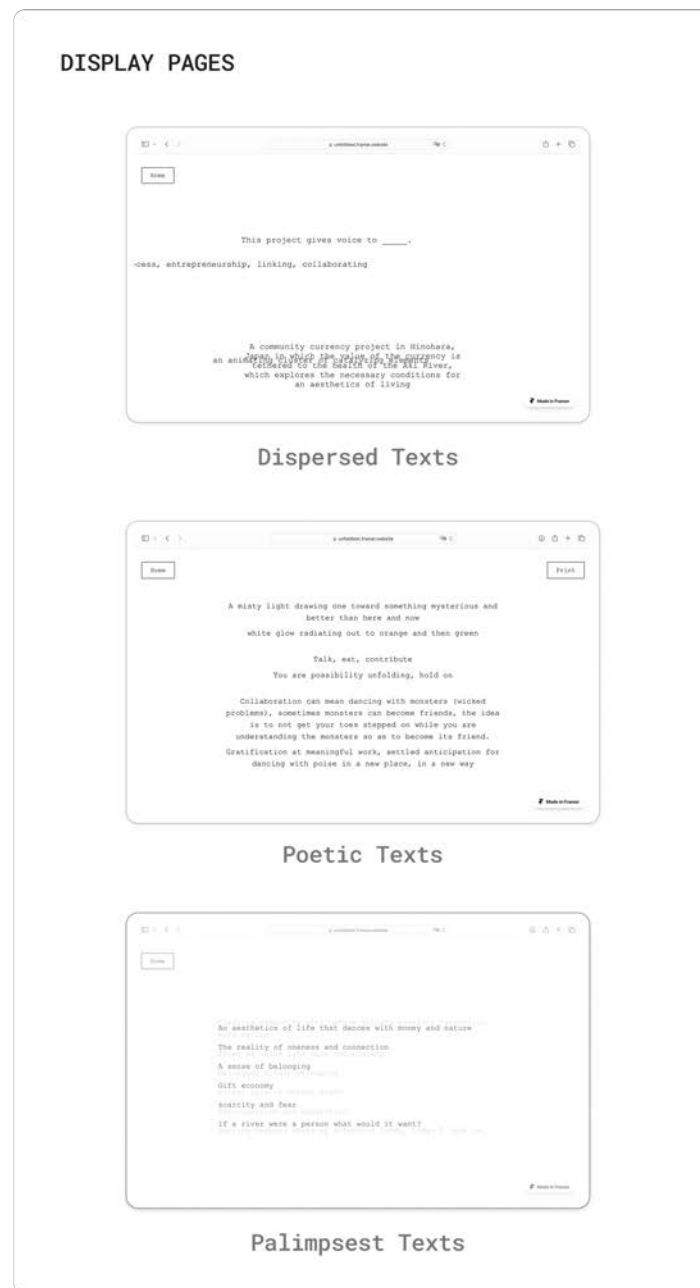
For Palimpsest Texts, previous writings are layered sequentially and displayed as changing overlays over time. This animated sequence allows the viewer to trace the transformation of ideas over time, visualizing the accretive and unstable nature of interpretation following DP8. As each entry fades into the next, viewers witness how the same artwork may be refracted through different emotional or cognitive states—a visual embodiment of *différance* [27].

These display strategies are not just aesthetic but conceptual; they are designed to externalize the process of reflection in a way that can be shared, exhibited, or further interpreted by others.

A Vision for Automated Print Feature

The fourth envisioned dimension of the system is an automated print feature designed to transform the artist’s reflective writing into a physical artifact suitable for sharing and exhibition. Ideally, the system would store all written responses and apply generative techniques, such as keyword extraction and thematic clustering to produce prompts for image-generation tools. These prompts would drive the visual design of typographic pages, resulting in a personalized pamphlet that reflects the artist’s language, style, and conceptual focus. Such a feature aims to materialize the ephemeral act of digital writing, enabling the translation of internal reflections into tangible, communicative outputs.

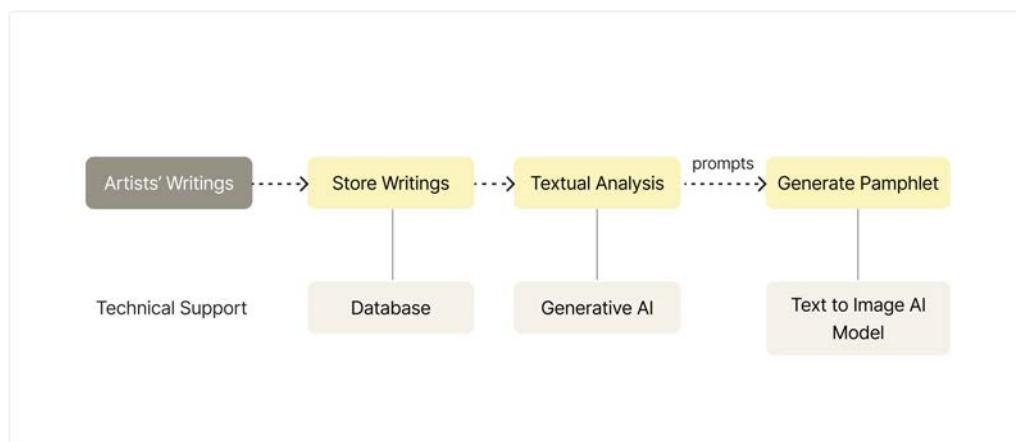
Rather than functioning as a literal transcription, this print output is imagined as a visual-poetic translation of the artist’s internal process—one that materializes their writing into a shareable, communicative form. Positioned as a comple-



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.18 Three Display Pages of Three Writing Modes

ment to the web-based reflective mode, this physical outcome extends the system into what might be called a *communicative mode* shown in figure 3.8: a medium through which written traces can be circulated, performed, or collaboratively engaged. Although current technological limitations, discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5, prevented the implementation of the automated print function, a manually designed pamphlet was developed to simulate its intended role and explore its potential. The design of this pamphlet is detailed in section 3.4.3, while its reception and function in real-world communication are discussed through artist feedback in section 4.3.2 and 4.3.3.



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 3.19 Workflow of the Ideal Print Feature

3.4.3 The Physical Outcome: A Pamphlet

As the tangible complement to the digital web tool, the pamphlet serves as a physical outcome that translates the artist's digital writing into a visually expressive and interpretive form.

The pamphlet was created based on eight audio recordings submitted by the participating artist. Each recording was transcribed and transformed into a single A4 design spread, formatted within an A5-size pamphlet. The process of transcription involved close listening and manual typing of the artist's spoken responses.

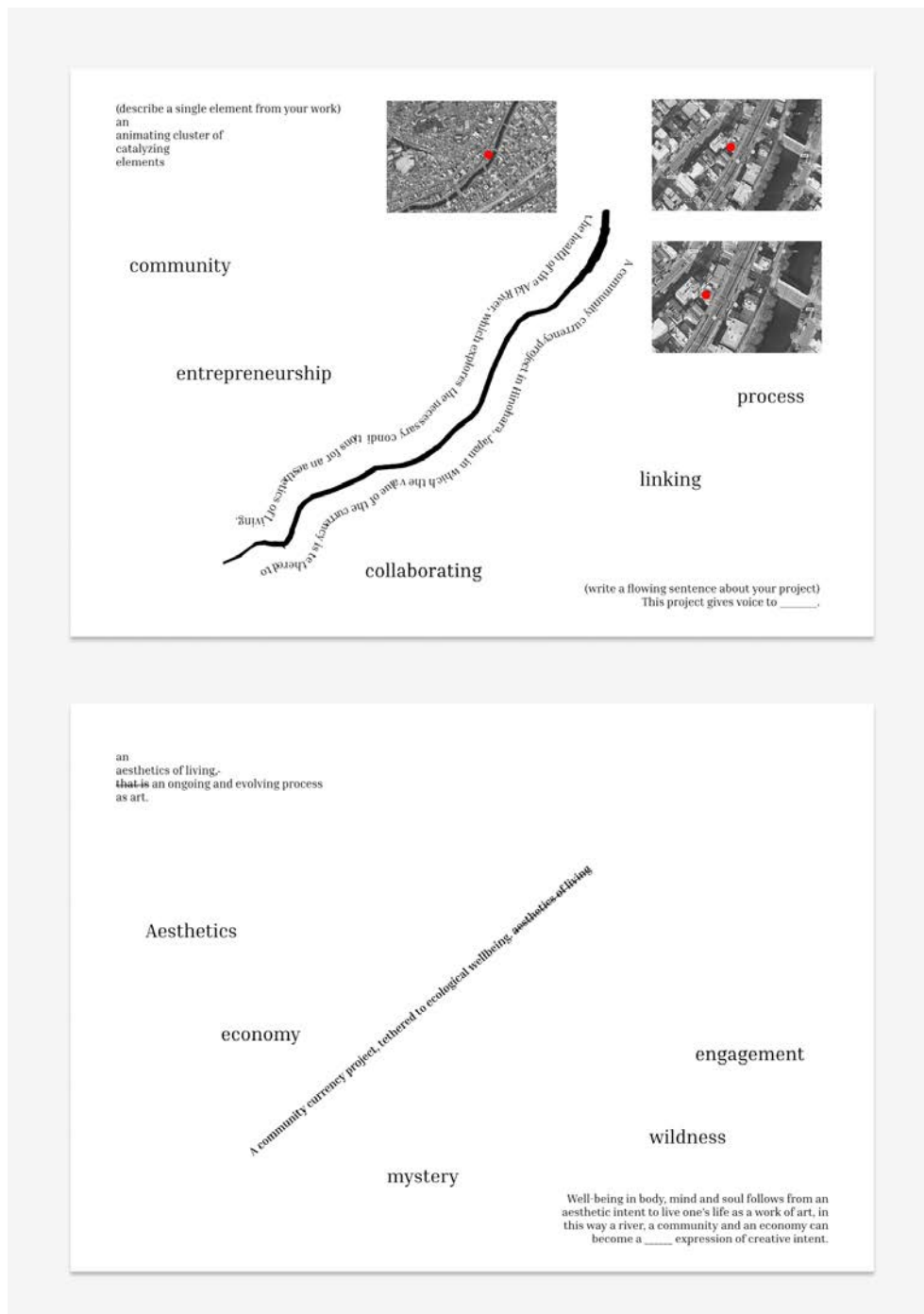
Typography is the central expressive element in the pamphlet, operating as both a structural and interpretive tool. In one recording, for example, the artist spoke about the Aki River and its personal significance. To visually translate this, a traced outline of the Aki River captured from Google Maps was used as a guiding line. Fragmented text from the recording was then bent and curved along the shape of the river, transforming the river into both a visual and narrative structure. This approach reflects Johanna Drucker's argument that typography can function as a visual form of interpretation rather than a neutral container of information [31].

In a conception of subsequent typography design, the artist repeatedly mentioned the idea of "flow." This word was visually interpreted through wave-like arrangements of text that moved across the page, visually echoing the rhythmic, unstructured quality of the spoken reflection.

One distinctive design feature is the representation of erasure. When listening to the recordings, moments where the artist deleted or retracted their words were marked through the use of strikethrough text in the transcription. This design choice was informed by deconstructive thinking, particularly Derrida's concept of *sous rature* (under erasure), which foregrounds absence and contradiction as central to meaning-making [32].

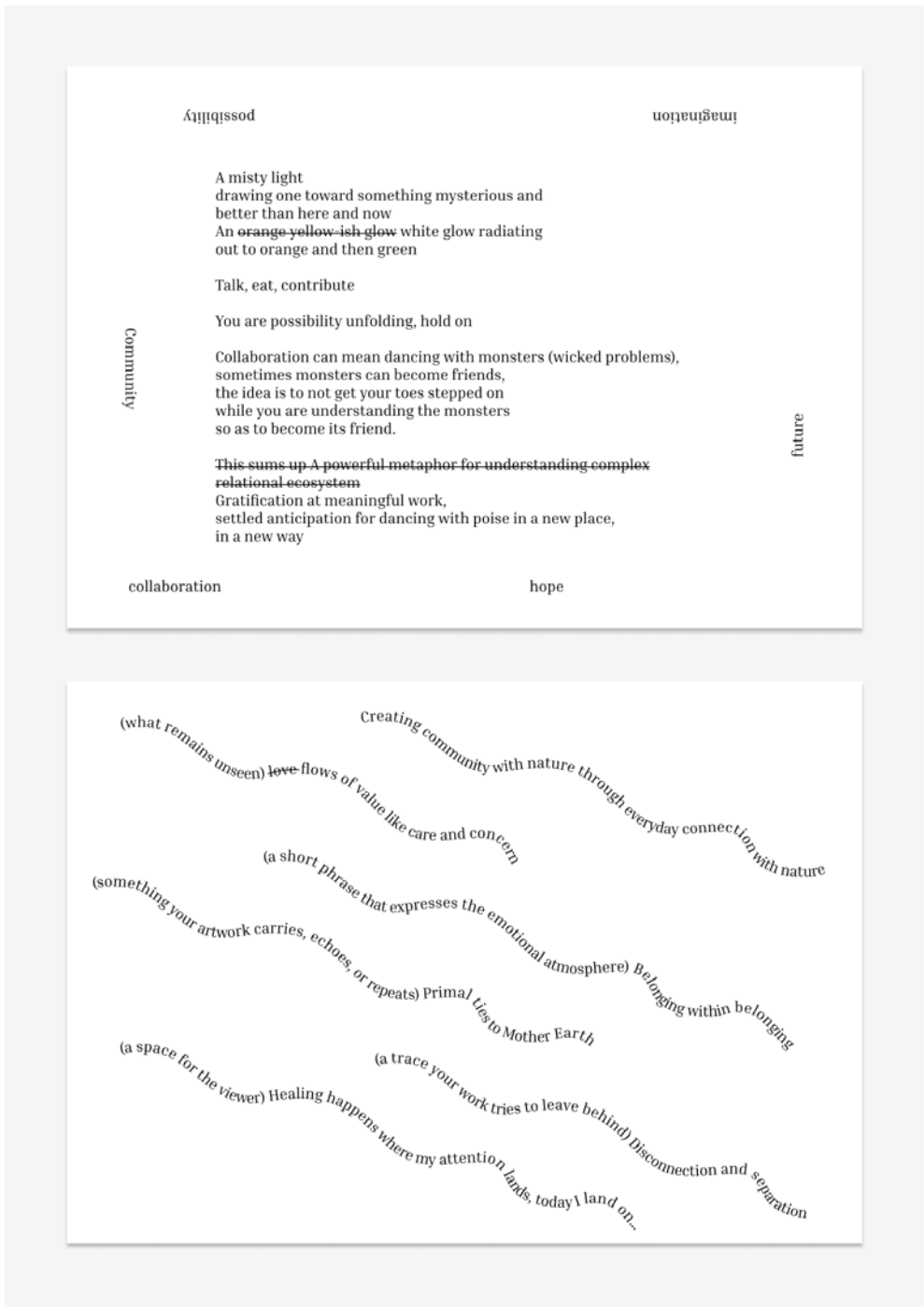
To provide clarity and facilitate further use, a plain-text appendix was attached at the end of the pamphlet. This serves as a reference version of all transcribed content, supporting accessibility.

Beyond its role as a reflective artifact for the artist, the pamphlet also serves as a communicative bridge between the artist and their audience. Unlike traditional artist statements that prioritize clarity, this format invites interpretive openness and emotional resonance. The interplay of fragmented text, expressive typography, and visual composition offers readers multiple points of entry, encouraging them to experience rather than simply consume the artist's words. In this way, the pamphlet becomes a dialogic object that mediates between private reflection and public presentation. It allows audiences not only to understand the artist's process, but to engage with the affective dimensions and textual layers that often remain invisible in conventional art communication. As such, it serves to extend the function of writing from self-explanation to relational encounter.



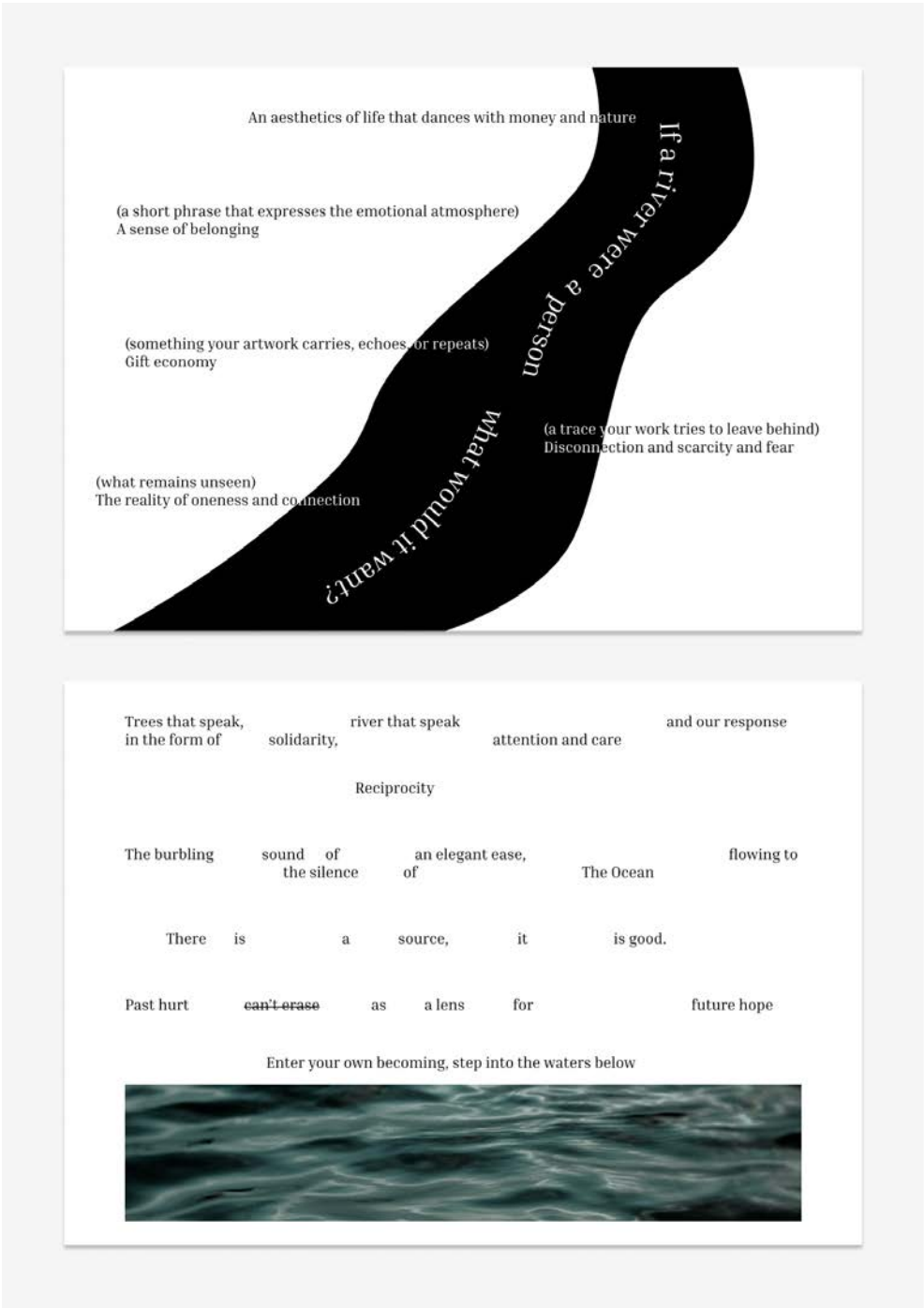
(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.20 Pamphlet Page 1-4



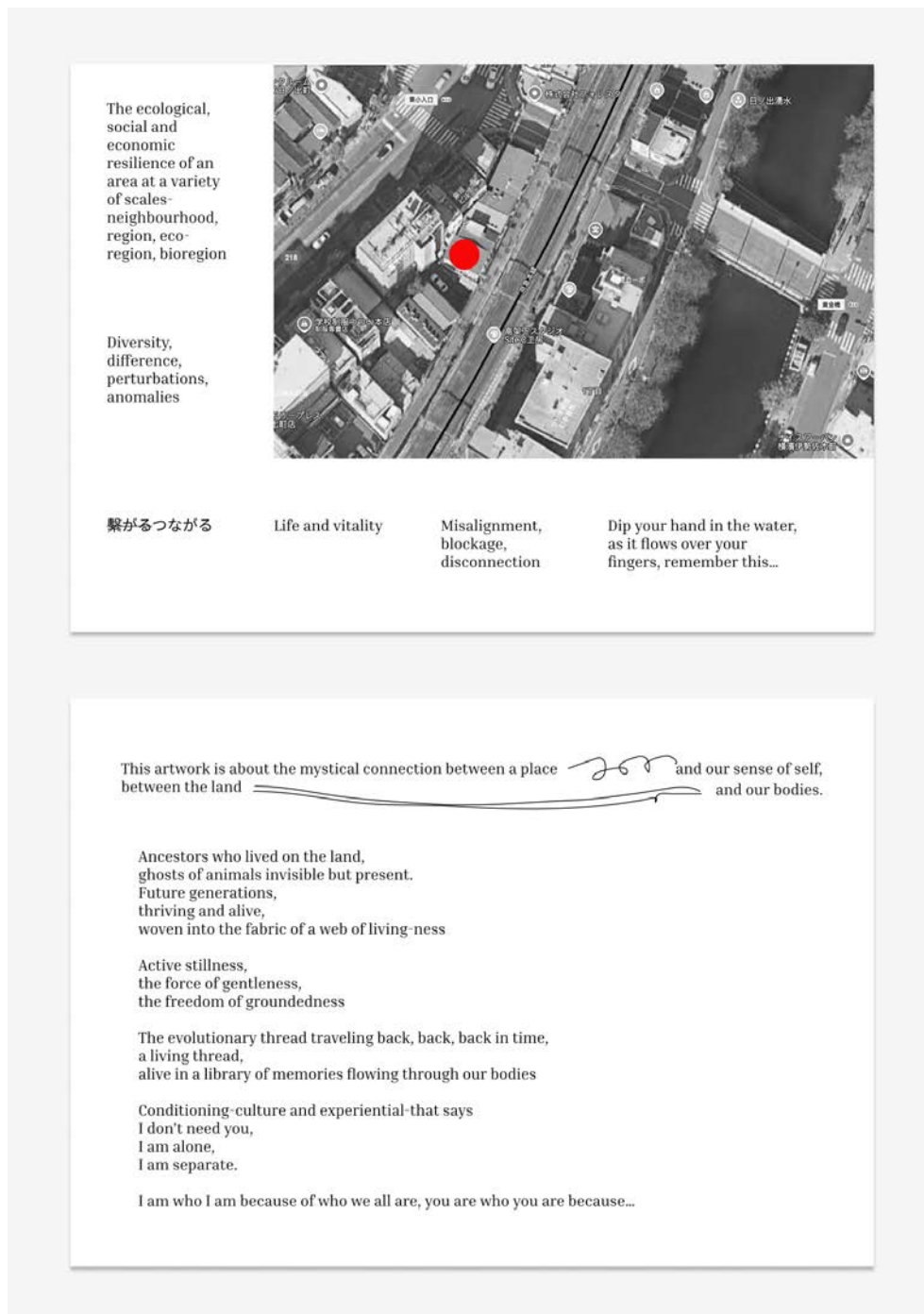
(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.21 Pamphlet Page 5-8



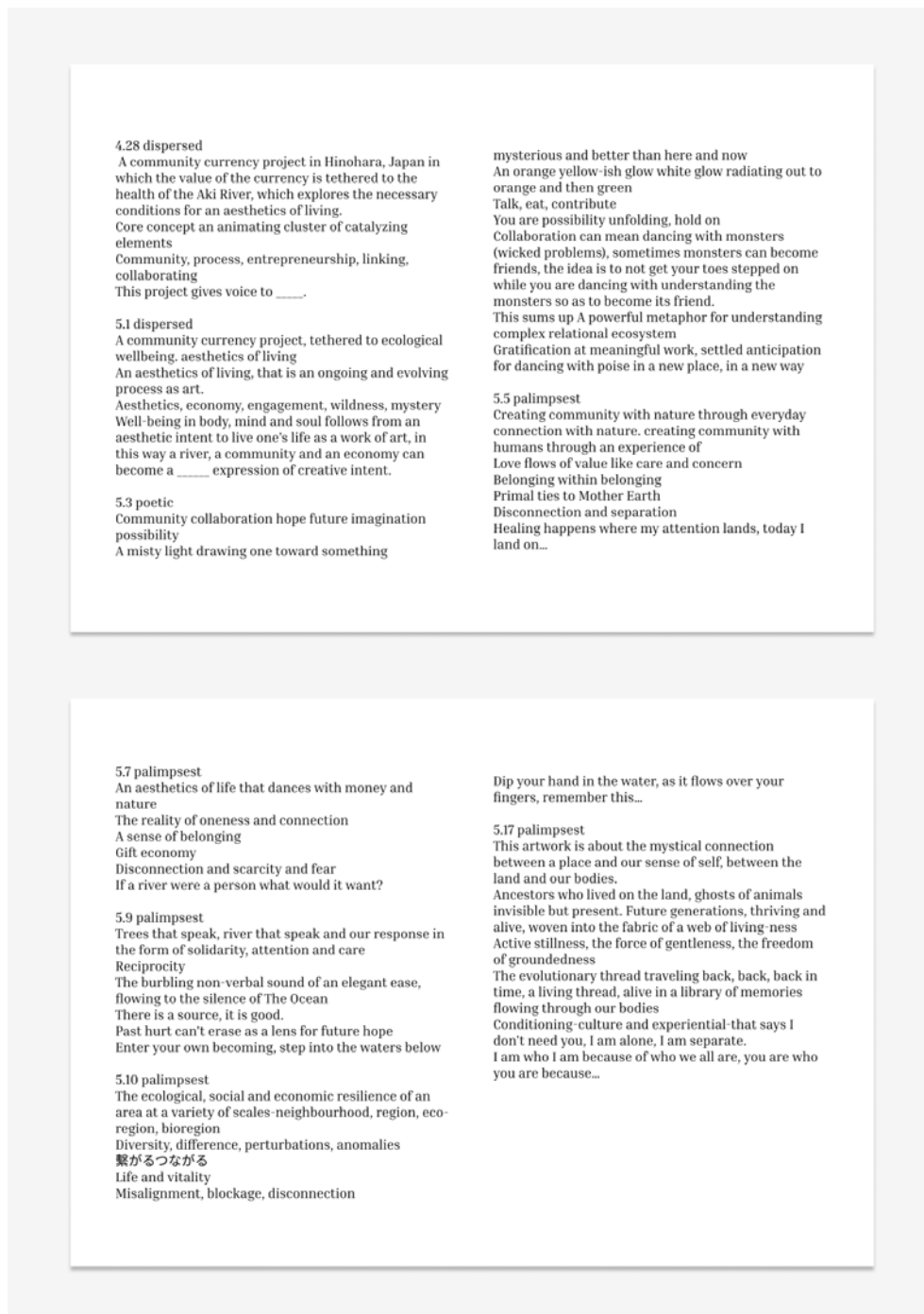
(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.22 Pamphlet Page 9-12



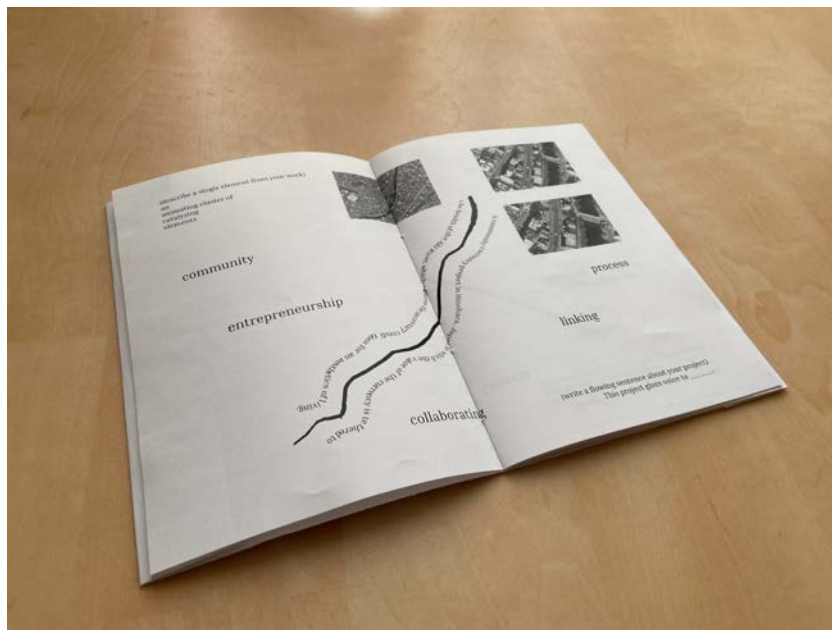
(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.23 Pamphlet Page 13-16



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.24 Pamphlet Page 17-20



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.25 The Printed Pamphlet

Chapter 4

Validation

4.1. Validation Structure

The validation process for this project unfolded in two phases, emerging organically rather than through pre-established planning. Initially, a preliminary accessibility test was conducted with a small group of 5 KMD graduate students who had backgrounds in art. This early-stage feedback was not intended as a formal validation study, but rather served as a practical exploration to assess the usability and clarity of the initial web tool prototype. However, insights from this pilot surfaced limitations in the tool’s interface and language accessibility, prompting critical design revisions.

Realizing that this short-term, usability-focused test lacked the depth to assess the reflective and communicative potential of the system, the project pivoted toward a second, more immersive phase: a longitudinal engagement study. In this second phase, a practicing artist used the refined tool continuously over a 21-day period, generating writing and participating in an unstructured interview facilitated through a reflective artifact, the pamphlet. This phase allowed for a richer exploration of how the tool functions within the rhythms of an artist’s practice and its potential role in artistic communication.

Together, these two phases shaped a validation structure that reflects both formative and summative evaluation logics: the pilot test informed interface design and accessibility, while the longitudinal engagement uncovered the tool’s deeper impact on artistic expression and dialogue.

4.2. Phase I: Preliminary Accessibility Test

4.2.1 Objectives

The pilot test served as an initial investigation into the accessibility and usability of the first prototype of the web tool. Though not originally planned as a formal phase of validation, this test was conducted to assess how clearly users could navigate the interface, interpret the prompts, and engage with the writing experience. The key objective was to surface any friction points or misunderstandings that might prevent users, particularly artists with varying levels of familiarity with creative writing, from using the tool meaningfully.

4.2.2 Methodology and Participants

This pilot test involved five graduate students from Keio University's Graduate School of Media Design (KMD), all of whom had an art or design background. Participants were invited to use the first iteration of the Reflective Web Tool independently. No facilitation was given during the writing session, to reflect a realistic solo use case.

Each participant was asked to:

1. Choose one of the three writing modes.
2. Complete a full writing session using the prompt journey.
3. Provide immediate feedback through short reflective comments and informal discussion.

While brief, these sessions offered insight into initial user expectations and interface usability, helping to identify mismatches between the tool's design logic and user understanding.

4.2.3 Key Feedback and Design Revisions

The feedback from the preliminary test focused on three main areas:

- Language and Differentiation

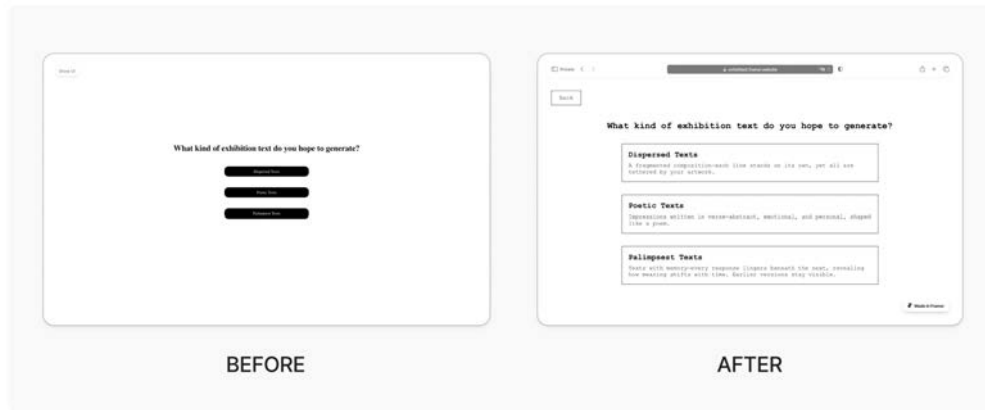
Four out of five participants noted that the prompt questions felt too vague or abstract, making it difficult to know how to begin writing. Additionally, some participants struggled with specific word choices, citing them as overly obscure or conceptually dense. This feedback suggested a need to refine the word choices of the prompts and make them more easy to understand. Detailed prompt revisions are referenced in table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Prompts Revisions

Writing Mode Prompts Belong To	Previous Prompts	Revised Prompts
Dispersed	Write a phrase that feels like it belongs to your artwork but does not describe it directly.	Choose a single element(visual, material, technical, conceptual, etc.) from your work—describe it without naming the element.
	Describe what is missing from your artwork, using only five words.	If your artwork were broken into five unrelated words, what would they be?
	Write a sentence where a word is missing, leaving a blank space	Write a flowing sentence about your artwork or project, and leave one word blank (use 4 underscores to replace missing word).
Poetic	Describe this word using a texture or surface it reminds you of.	Pick a word. Now imagine touching it - what surface or texture comes to mind? Describe that feeling.
	Transform this word into an action.	Pick a word. If that word could move, what would it do? Describe it as an action.

Three participants reported that the Select Text Mode page lacked sufficient information to help them distinguish between the three available writ-

ing modes. As a result, their selection felt arbitrary, and they were unsure whether their choice aligned with their writing intentions. This insight informed the later addition of brief descriptions for each writing mode on the selection page; see figure 4.1.



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 4.1 Design Revision of the Select-Text-Mode Page

- Navigation Experience

Two participants expressed confusion about the overall writing journey, specifically not knowing how many prompts remained. As a response, a progress indicator was introduced, a design intervention further discussed in section 3.4.2, to provide users with a sense of structure, direction, and accomplishment throughout the writing journey; see figure 4.2.

One participant used the “back” function to return to a previous prompt but discovered their earlier answer had not been saved, which negatively impacted their engagement. This feedback informed the introduction of a memory function adding to preserve and reload past responses when navigating backward, which has been discussed in section 3.4.2. Furthermore, to improve intuitiveness, the “Back” button was relocated to the top-left corner, a position supported by established interface conventions for return actions [29]; see figure 4.3.



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 4.2 Design Revision of the Prompt-Writing Page(Progress Indicator)



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 4.3 Design Revision of the Prompt-Writing Page(Back Button)

- Immersive Interaction

One participant expressed a need to “pause and clear the mind” before engaging in writing, suggesting a moment of grounding or transition. This insight pointed to the introduction of the meditation page added prior to the prompt-writing phase. As elaborated in section 3.4.2, this page supports users to mentally transition into reflection.

4.3. Phase II: Longitudinal Engagement Study

4.3.1 Validation Focus

The validation of this phase aims to understand how the final design, consisting of a digital web tool and a printed pamphlet, functions within a real artistic context and supports reflective creative writing. Building upon insights from the Phase I preliminary accessibility test, which highlighted issues of clarity, navigation, and engagement. This phase shifts from surface-level usability concerns to deeper experiential and contextual understanding. Rather than testing predefined hypotheses, the goal is to investigate how artists engage with the tool in practice, and what forms of value, reflection, or communication emerge through its use.

This inquiry is grounded in the framework of *research through practice* proposed by Frayling [1]: “In research through practice, the thinking is, so to speak, embodied in the artefact. The artefact reflects back on the process, and becomes the basis for communication of ideas to others.” As Frayling proposed, *research through practice* foregrounds the creative process itself as a mode of inquiry, in which knowledge is generated by making, reflecting, and engaging in situated experimentation. Following Frayling’s model, this research sees the artist’s use of the tool as a performative and interpretive act that co-produces insight alongside the artifact.

Drawing on the artist’s 21-day use of the web tool and follow-up discussion, the chapter explores how the tool influenced his writing, meaning-making, and potential for co-creative dialogue. This validation stage is therefore less about measuring predefined outcomes, and more about tracing how the system operates in practice, revealing its affordances, limitations, and emerging values.

4.3.2 Methodology

Participant Profile

The participant in this longitudinal study is a Canadian visual artist in his 60s, currently based in Yokohama, Japan. He runs Kocogarden, a community-oriented art space in the Koganecho area that merges ecological well-being with socially engaged artistic practices. The space serves as a platform for fostering dialogue and shared meaning-making within a local context.

Table 4.2 Demographics of Participant Artist

Age	Nationality	Location
60-70	Canada	Yokohama, Japan

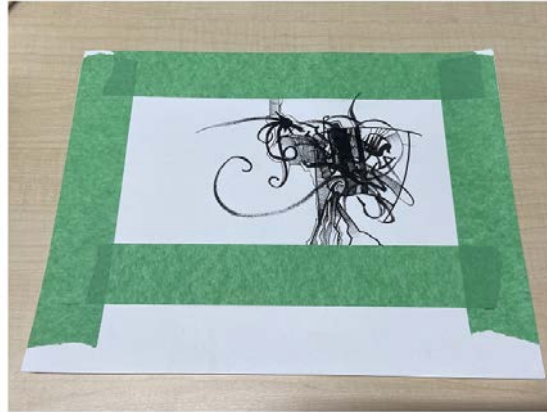
Rather than working strictly within traditional fine art categories, the participant describes himself as a process-based artist, emphasizing intuitive, reflective, and embodied modes of making. This includes drawing and project-based practices that unfold over time and are often site-responsive.



(Source: Author’s Archive)

Figure 4.4 The Space of Kocogarden

The participant has a longstanding writing practice, primarily through irregular journaling. He uses writing both as a tool for self-reflection and as an integral



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 4.5 Artist's Visual Artwork

part of his creative process. His approach is aligned with the aims of the reflective writing tool, making him an appropriate participant for exploring its potential in practice.

Methods of Data Collection

Data for this study were collected through artist's longitudinal engagement with the prompt-based web tool and a reflective interview prompted by physical pamphlet. The process was intentionally designed to unfold over time, aligning with the values of research *through* practice [1], where the interaction between designer, artifact, and participant becomes a dynamic site of knowledge generation.

The data collection began with a 21-day engagement period, during which the participating artist integrated the digital writing tool into his existing creative routine. As the researcher, I supported this process by sending daily reminder emails encouraging consistent use and, at the end of each week, follow-up emails offering motivational feedback. This ongoing interaction aimed to create a gentle structure around the artist's self-directed use of the tool.

Throughout the 21 days, the artist documented each writing session by recording his screen, and shared these materials with me via a shared iCloud Drive folder. In total, eight recordings were collected. These recordings functioned as a trace

of both the written content and the embodied experience of using the tool.

After the engagement period, I conducted a one-on-one unstructured interview with the artist. No prepared questions were used; instead, I brought the printed pamphlet produced from the artist's writing via the web tool and used it as a stimulus for reflection. The interview unfolded as an open conversation around the artist's impressions of the pamphlet, his experience with the digital tool, and the broader implications of reflective writing within his practice. The dynamic dialogic flow of the unstructured interview is illustrated in Figure 4.6. The interview was audio-recorded for analytical purposes, which allows revisit the conversation and identify emerging themes through close listening and transcription.

4.4. Findings and Discussion

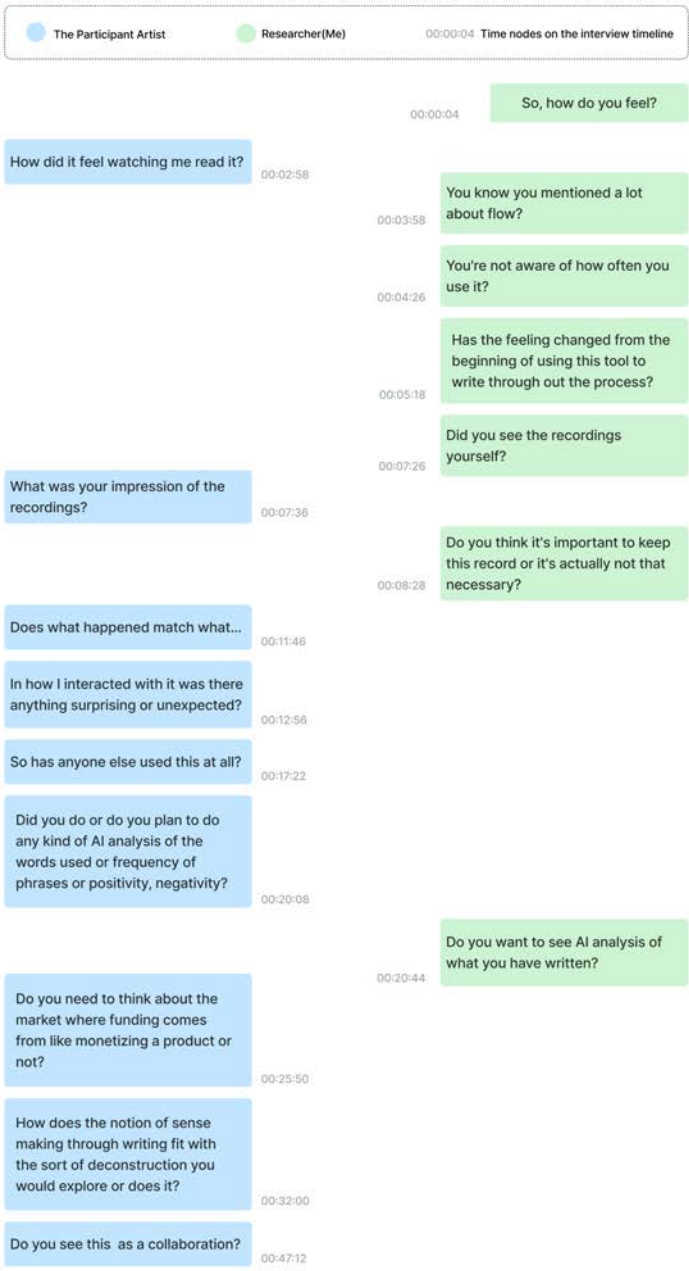
This section presents the key insights that emerged through the artist's 21-day engagement with the digital writing tool and the follow-up unstructured interview prompted by the printed pamphlet. The findings are not framed as generalizable results but as situated knowledge generated through reflective practice and dialogue. Two main findings emerged: (1) fragmentary writing enhances intuitive and affective expression in artistic practice; and (2) the digital and physical outputs jointly implies new systems of artistic communication. These findings are grounded in the artist's direct experiences and reflections.

4.4.1 Fragmentary Writing Enhances Artistic and Intuitive Expression

Throughout the writing process, the artist engaged deeply with the tool's non-linear, fragmentary structure. This mode of composition allowed him to bypass formal narrative constraints and explore spontaneous, affective responses. As he explained during the interview:

"It facilitated the process because it was okay if it[input] was a phrase or a fragment, that I could be more freer."

"I am forced to form sentences form paragraphs to communicate something I already understand to somebody else whereas this [tool] I don't have to understand



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 4.6 Dialogic Flow of The Unstructured Interview

it. It's encouraging me to not have to understand. I can just enter fragments and it's okay."

This approach resonated with his existing art-making processes, which emphasize letting go of conscious planning and trusting emergence:

"I wasn't trying to either repeat or not repeat. I was just trying to answer the questions that day... I sort of thought there would be... like, patterns would emerge."

"Maybe this is the fundamental thing of it—that it's trusting the apparent incoherence, trusting that there will be coherence at the end... I don't have to form a full sentence, I don't have to form a paragraph."

He compared the process to his visual art practice of layering brushstrokes:

"Each [brushstroke] I'm not thinking about anything at the end, what they'll become... then digitally capture all the brush strokes and pull them together... there's always something beautiful that I couldn't consciously plan or think about or make happen—it just occurs."

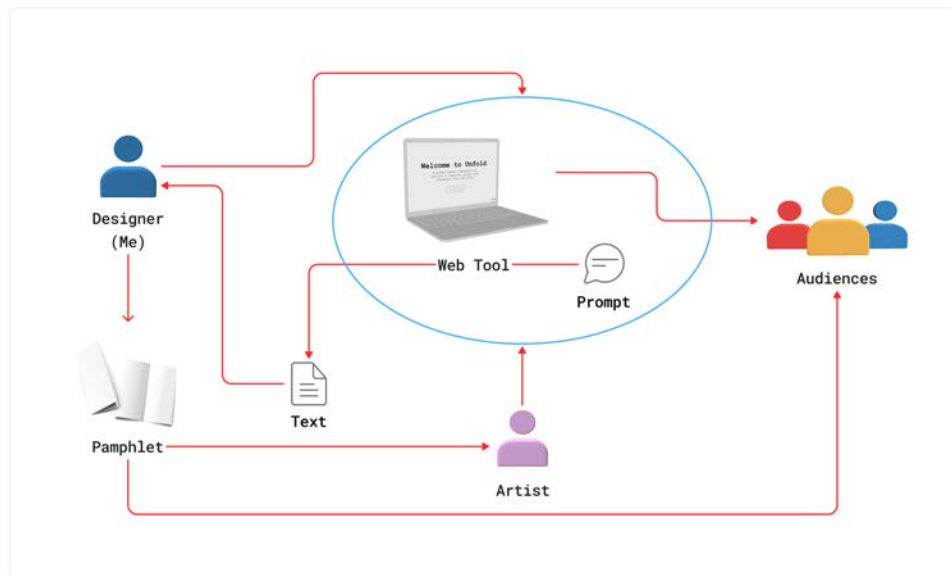
He described writing in short forms as more emotionally and psychologically aligned with subconscious processes:

"Writing in fragments, it's a process that relates more to something beyond consciousness... If I write in fragments or in really short length of text I feel more in that way... you're related to a more authentic self."

These excerpts support the idea that non-linear structures that the web tool encourages, align with artists' internal processing and can rise insights that conventional textual formats often suppress.

4.4.2 The Dual-Format Tool Fosters New Modes of Artistic Communication

The second key finding focuses on how the tool's digital and physical components jointly establish a new artistic communication system. As shown in figure 4.7 Actor-Network (A), the co-creation system includes the artist, the prompts, the web interface, the generated text, the printed pamphlet, and the audiences, with the designer serving as an intermediary. This ecosystem allowed multiple layers of expression and reception.



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 4.7 Actor-Network Diagram(A)

The artist articulated that receiving a printed artifact from his own digital inputs was emotionally meaningful:

“I like that there’s been attention and care given to the words I’ve written. And that I feel like I have something I can use.”

He emphasized that the physical output added value beyond what a digital tool alone could provide:

“The attention and care to hand down the pamphlet does something else... it’s like a collaboration with another artist.”

Importantly, he described this act not just as documentation, but as a conversation mediated through materiality:

“I’m having a conversation with myself about this project, reflecting that creates something then you have a conversation with it, like bringing meaning to it in some way and then I see this[pamphlet] because anything you did with it would be a conversation.”

“Anything you did with it would be a conversation... even if it was as simple as printing out my entry, it’s that way a conversation.”

This suggests that the pamphlet acts as a communicative bridge, carrying meaning beyond the screen. He reflected on its possible use in future art shows:

“...the documentation for a gallery show is art. It’s like a collaboration with another artist. It’s this one-off. The tool just facilitates this creation of a single thing that is your artistic expression.”

This perspective points to the emergence of a dynamic artistic system where writing, printing, and sharing form a communicative loop between designer, artist, and audience.

4.4.3 Future Use Cases and System Sustainability

The artist envisioned two future use cases, where the system could be adapted beyond this initial collaboration. These speculative uses—depicted in figure 4.8 Actor-Network (B) and figure 4.9 Actor-Network (C)—demonstrate the sustainability and flexibility of the design.

Artistic Management Tool for Collaborative Art Projects

The artist imagined the tool being used for documenting complex, multi-stakeholder projects, offering a form of collaborative journaling, see figure 4.8:

“It’s kind of a journal. But that can become something useful to tell the story of a project. . . It’s not a technical way of telling the story. To me it’s honest because it’s just what I’m thinking of.”

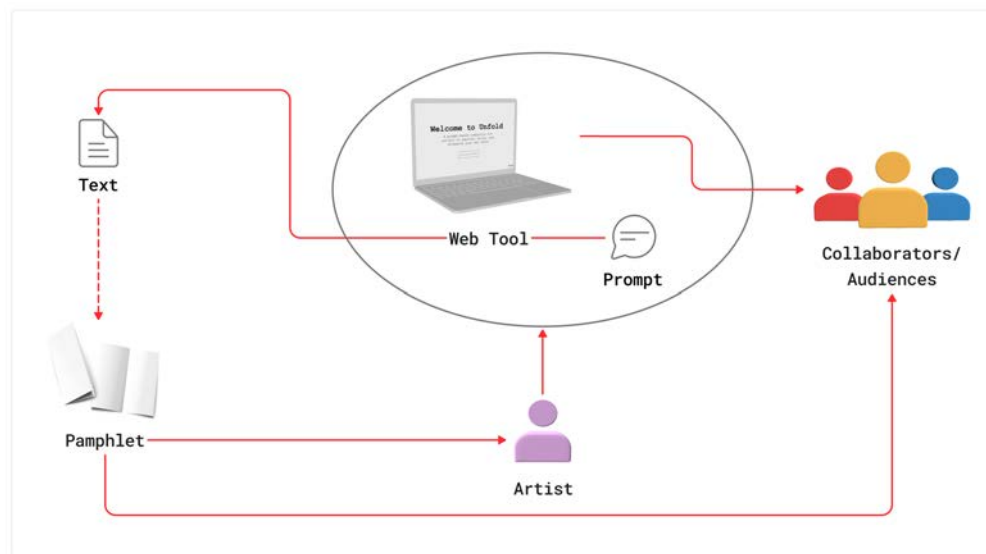
“I usually have to document [projects] somehow for somebody. . . and it’s just this other stream of data that’s quite different from everything else.”

He also articulated the tool’s usefulness in collaborative art projects as a documentation and communication aid:

“I think it’s a kind of conversation. . . And then, I’m also thinking who I can share this with. It’s a way to talk about the project”.

“This tool. . . helps for these kinds of processes. . . to tell the story of a project. . . in a way that’s interesting to me”.

The system supports authentic documentation that doesn’t interrupt the creative process, enabling contributors to generate project narratives over time.



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 4.8 Actor-Network Diagram(B)

Conversational Device for Audience Dialogue

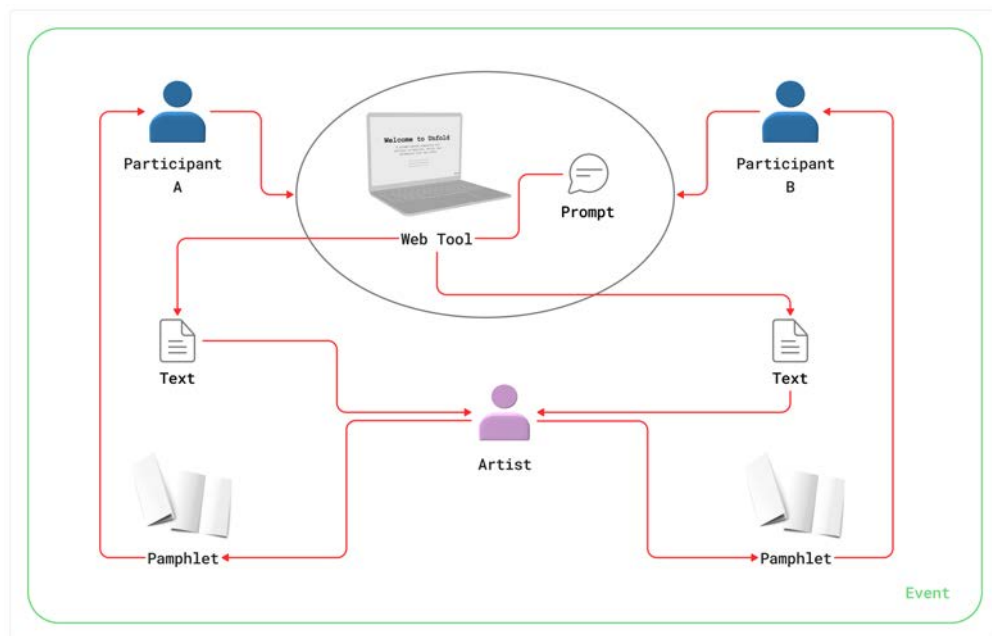
In the second imagined use, the artist suggested the tool could function as a social system for stimulating conversation and audience participation, figure 4.9. Reflecting on the experience of being both writer and recipient, he stated:

“Like everyone who uses the tool—you interact with what they give you, you send them something... kind of digital remote... seems interesting”.

He proposed a future scenario where visitors interact with the tool in a shared space:

“If this tool was available to people to use as they came into the space... it could be interesting... to produce something.”

These reflections suggest that the two-part system functions not only as a private, reflective tool but also as a generative medium for dialogue and collaborative engagement. The integration of digital and physical forms sustains a system of practice that may continue evolving across contexts.



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 4.9 Actor-Network Diagram(C)

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1. Limitations

While the research has shown promising outcomes, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations. The project was designed in English and is informed by Western theories of writing, including Derridean deconstruction and poststructuralist literary practices. This linguistic and cultural framework may limit the accessibility and resonance of the tool for non-English speakers. For instance, Japanese writing structures may not align with the textual assumptions embedded in the prompts or interface of the tool. The concept of fragmentation, for example, might be interpreted differently in languages that do not rely on discrete word units.

Additionally, the project was validated through a single case study, and while this allowed for rich, in-depth insights, it limits the generalizability of the findings. Future work could include a wider and more diverse group of artists and more extensive longitudinal testing to assess adaptability across different creative contexts.

5.2. Future Work: Toward an Automated Print Feature

One compelling avenue for future development lies in realizing the idealized vision of the print function embedded within the digital tool. While the current pamphlet was manually designed to serve as a communicative extension of the artist's reflective writing, the long-term goal is to automate this process through generative technologies. This would enable the system to generate typographically expressive pamphlets directly from the artist's written data, effectively closing the

loop between internal reflection and external communication.

The envisioned feature would draw upon a database of an artist’s past writings to conduct textual analysis, identify key themes or keywords, and generate visual prompts. These prompts could then guide image-generating AI models to produce typographic page designs in alignment with the tone and content of the artist’s texts.

To evaluate the feasibility of this concept, a small experimental test was conducted. One passage from the artist’s written recordings during the 21-day engagement was selected and used to prompt three generative AI models. The input prompt(X) was crafted to simulate the design logic of the current pamphlet:

“Generate a minimalist typographic artwork featuring poetic, reflective phrases such as: Trees that speak, river that speak and our response in the form of solidarity, attention and care / Reciprocity / The burbling sound of an elegant ease, flowing to the silence of The Ocean / There is a source, it is good. / Past hurt as a lens for future hope / Enter your own becoming, step into the waters below. Use expressive text composition—some lines arranged in curves, arcs, or winding shapes to mimic water flow or movement. Combine both left-aligned and center-aligned text blocks with negative space. Use a clean, serif or modern sans-serif font. Background should be plain white or slightly textured off-white. Let the layout breathe, with poetic rhythm guiding spatial arrangement. The final image should resemble a design pamphlet with conceptual art aesthetics, focusing entirely on typography and spatial storytelling.”

The test used three models: ChatGPT-4o, Gemini 2.5 Flash, and Recraft V3. ChatGPT-4o and Gemini were selected due to their strong image-generation capabilities and accessibility via API, allowing for easier integration into future iterations of the tool. Recraft V3 was chosen for its early reputation for handling long-text inputs effectively.

Each model demonstrated partial success. ChatGPT-4o retained 96% of the original text and arranged it in flowing, wave-like lines with minimal but spatially aware design. Gemini 2.5 Flash preserved all words but laid them over static

decorative backgrounds without expressive typographic treatment. Recraft V3 retained 96% of the original text and generated more visually rich backgrounds conceptually related to the text but lacked sophisticated manipulation of typography beyond basic formatting like size and spacing. None of the three models could yet deliver the poetic, typographic storytelling necessary for the envisioned pamphlet output.



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 5.1 AI-generated Images From Different AI Models Under Prompt X

Despite current limitations, these results reveal a path forward. As multimodal AI models continue to develop better controls over layout, text structure, and semantic design, the integration of a generative pamphlet feature could become viable. Future versions of the system may incorporate internal AI pipelines that allow for reflective writing to be transformed automatically into typographically meaningful and visually compelling printed artifacts, expanding both the expressive range and communicative potential of the tool.

5.3. Conclusion

This thesis has explored the challenges artists face when articulating their creative practices in written form, and proposed a prompt-based design approach

to support reflective and expressive artistic writing. Through an iterative *research through design* [1] process, three prototypes were developed: a paper-based prompt sheet, a reflective sticker kit, and finally a digital web tool Unfold paired with a printed pamphlet. Each iteration responded to empirical insights gathered from artists, with design strategies grounded in Derrida’s deconstruction, poststructuralist creative writing skills, and interaction design principles.

The final web tool introduced three writing modes: Dispersed, Poetic, and Palimpsest, that allow users to move away from linear and explanatory writing conventions toward more intuitive and affective modes of self-expression. Paired with a creatively designed pamphlet, the tool constitutes a dual-format system that supports both internal reflection and external communication. The validation study, conducted through preliminary accessibility test and a 21-day artist’s engagement following a post-use unstructured interview, revealed the potential of fragmentary formats to enhance intuitive writing, and demonstrated how the digital and physical outputs could act as conversation catalysts in collaborative or social art-making contexts.

While the findings offer rich insights, they are limited by the single case study format and the tool’s current reliance on English and Western writing frameworks. Future work may explore automated generation of pamphlets using AI-driven textual analysis and typographic image generation, extending the tool’s communicative potential.

The work contributes to interaction design, practice-based research, and creative writing support systems by demonstrating how writing tools can embody alternative literary and philosophical frameworks.

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Appendices

A. Transcription of Recordings of Artist's 21-Day Engagement with the Web Tool

Dates: 2025.04.28

Writing Mode: Dispersed Texts

P: Write a single, standalone sentence about your artwork.

A: A community currency project in Hinohara, Japan in which the
→ value of the currency is tethered to the health of the Aki
→ River, which explores the necessary conditions for an
→ aesthetics of living.

P: Choose a single element(visual, material, technical, conceptual,
→ etc.) from your work-describe it without naming the element.

A: Core concept an animating cluster of catalyzing elements

P: If your artwork were broken into five unrelated words, what
→ would they be?

A: Community, process, entrepreneurship, linking, collaborating

P: Write a flowing sentence about your artwork or project, and
→ leave one word blank (use 4 underscores____to replace missing
→ word).

A: This project gives voice to ____.

Dates: 2025.05.01

Writing Mode: Dispersed Texts

P: Write a single, standalone sentence about your artwork.

A: A community currency project, tethered to ecological wellbeing.

↪ aesthetics of living

P: Choose a single element(visual, material, technical, conceptual,

↪ etc.) from your work-describe it without naming the element.

A: An aesthetics of living, that is an ongoing and evolving process

↪ as art.

P: If your artwork were broken into five unrelated words, what

↪ would they be?

A: Aesthetics, economy, engagement, wildness, mystery

P: Write a flowing sentence about your artwork or project, and

↪ leave one word blank (use 4 underscores____to replace missing

↪ word).

A: Well-being in body, mind and soul follows from an aesthetic

↪ intent to live one's life as a work of art, in this way a

↪ river, a community and an economy can become a _____

↪ expression of creative intent.

Dates: 2025.05.03

Writing Mode: Poetic Texts

P: Write six words that you feel define or capture the essence of

↪ your artwork.

A: Community collaboration hope future imagination possibility

P: Pick a word. Now imagine touching it - what surface or texture

↪ comes to mind? Describe that feeling.

A: A misty light drawing one toward something mysterious and better

↪ than here and now

P: Associate one word with a color or temperature. Describe it.

A: An orange yellow-ish glow white glow radiating out to orange and

↪ then green

P: Pick a word. If that word could move, what would it do? Describe

↪ it as an action.

A: Talk, eat, contribute

P: Begin a line with "You are..." and describe it in a way
↪ whispering.

A: You are possibility unfolding, hold on

P: Connect one word to a personal or universal memory.

A: Collaboration can mean dancing with monsters (wicked problems),
↪ sometimes monsters can become friends, the idea is to not get
↪ your toes stepped on while you are dancing with understanding
↪ the monsters so as to become its friend.

P: Write freely about how you feel toward the memory you wrote in
↪ the last question. Let your emotions take the lead.

A: This sums up A powerful metaphor for understanding complex
↪ relational ecosystem

A: Gratification at meaningful work, settled anticipation for
↪ dancing with poise in a new place, in a new way

Dates: 2025.05.05

Writing Mode: Palimpsest Texts

P: Write one sentence that expresses what your artwork is about.

A: Creating community with nature through everyday connection with
↪ nature. creating community with humans through an experience of

P: Describe what is always present in the work but remains unseen
↪ or unspoken.

A: Love flows of value like care and concern

P: Write a short phrase that expresses the emotional or sonic
↪ atmosphere of your artwork.

A: Belonging within belonging

P: Name something the artwork remembers - something it carries,
↪ echoes, or repeats.

A: Primal ties to Mother Earth

P: Express what your work tries to leave behind, whether a trace,
↪ residue, or rupture.

A: Disconnection and separation

P: End with an unfinished line that creates space for the viewer to
↪ enter the text.

A: Healing happens where my attention lands, today I land on...

Dates: 2025.05.07

Writing Mode: Palimpsest Texts

P: Write one sentence that expresses what your artwork is about.

A: An aesthetics of life that dances with money and nature

P: Describe what is always present in the work but remains unseen
↪ or unspoken.

A: The reality of oneness and connection

P: Write a short phrase that expresses the emotional or sonic
↪ atmosphere of your artwork.

A: A sense of belonging

P: Name something the artwork remembers - something it carries,
↪ echoes, or repeats.

A: Gift economy

P: Express what your work tries to leave behind, whether a trace,
↪ residue, or rupture.

A: Disconnection and scarcity and fear

P: End with an unfinished line that creates space for the viewer to
↪ enter the text.

A: If a river were a person what would it want?

Dates: 2025.05.09

Writing Mode: Palimpsest Texts

P: Write one sentence that expresses what your artwork is about.

A: Trees that speak, river that speak and our response in the form
↪ of solidarity, attention and care

P: Describe what is always present in the work but remains unseen
↪ or unspoken.

A: Reciprocity

P: Write a short phrase that expresses the emotional or sonic
↪ atmosphere of your artwork.

A: The burbling non-verbal sound of an elegant ease, flowing to the
↪ silence of The Ocean

P: Name something the artwork remembers - something it carries,
↪ echoes, or repeats.

A: There is a source, it is good.

P: Express what your work tries to leave behind, whether a trace,
↪ residue, or rupture.

A: Past hurt can't erase as a lens for future hope

P: End with an unfinished line that creates space for the viewer to
↪ enter the text.

A: Enter your own becoming, step into the waters below

Dates: 2025.05.10

Writing Mode: Palimpsest Texts

P: Write one sentence that expresses what your artwork is about.

A: The ecological, social and economic resilience of an area at a
↪ variety of scales- neighbourhood, region, eco-region, bioregion

P: Describe what is always present in the work but remains unseen
↪ or unspoken.

A: Diversity, difference, perturbations, anomalies

P: Write a short phrase that expresses the emotional or sonic
↪ atmosphere of your artwork.

A:

P: Name something the artwork remembers - something it carries,
↪ echoes, or repeats.

A: Life and vitality

P: Express what your work tries to leave behind, whether a trace,
↪ residue, or rupture.

A: Misalignment, blockage, disconnection

P: End with an unfinished line that creates space for the viewer to
↪ enter the text.

A: Dip your hand in the water, as it flows over your fingers,
↪ remember this...

Dates: 2025.05.17

Writing Mode: Palimpsest Texts

P: Write one sentence that expresses what your artwork is about.

A: This artwork is about the mystical connection between a place
↪ and our sense of self, between the land and our bodies.

P: Describe what is always present in the work but remains unseen
↪ or unspoken.

A: Ancestors who lived on the land, ghosts of animals invisible but
↪ present. Future generations, thriving and alive, woven into the
↪ fabric of a web of living-ness

P: Write a short phrase that expresses the emotional or sonic
↪ atmosphere of your artwork.

A: Active stillness, the force of gentleness, the freedom of
↪ groundedness

P: Name something the artwork remembers-something it carries,
↪ echoes, or repeats.

A: The evolutionary thread traveling back, back, back in time, a
↪ living thread, alive in a library of memories flowing through
↪ our bodies

P: Express what your work tries to leave behind, whether a trace,
↪ residue, or rupture.

A: Conditioning-culture and experiential-that says I don't need
↪ you, I am alone, I am separate.

P: End with an unfinished line that creates space for the viewer to
↪ enter the text.

A: I am who I am because of who we all are, you are who you are
↪ because...