

# Visual Communication: Design intervention

Process, Research & Outcome

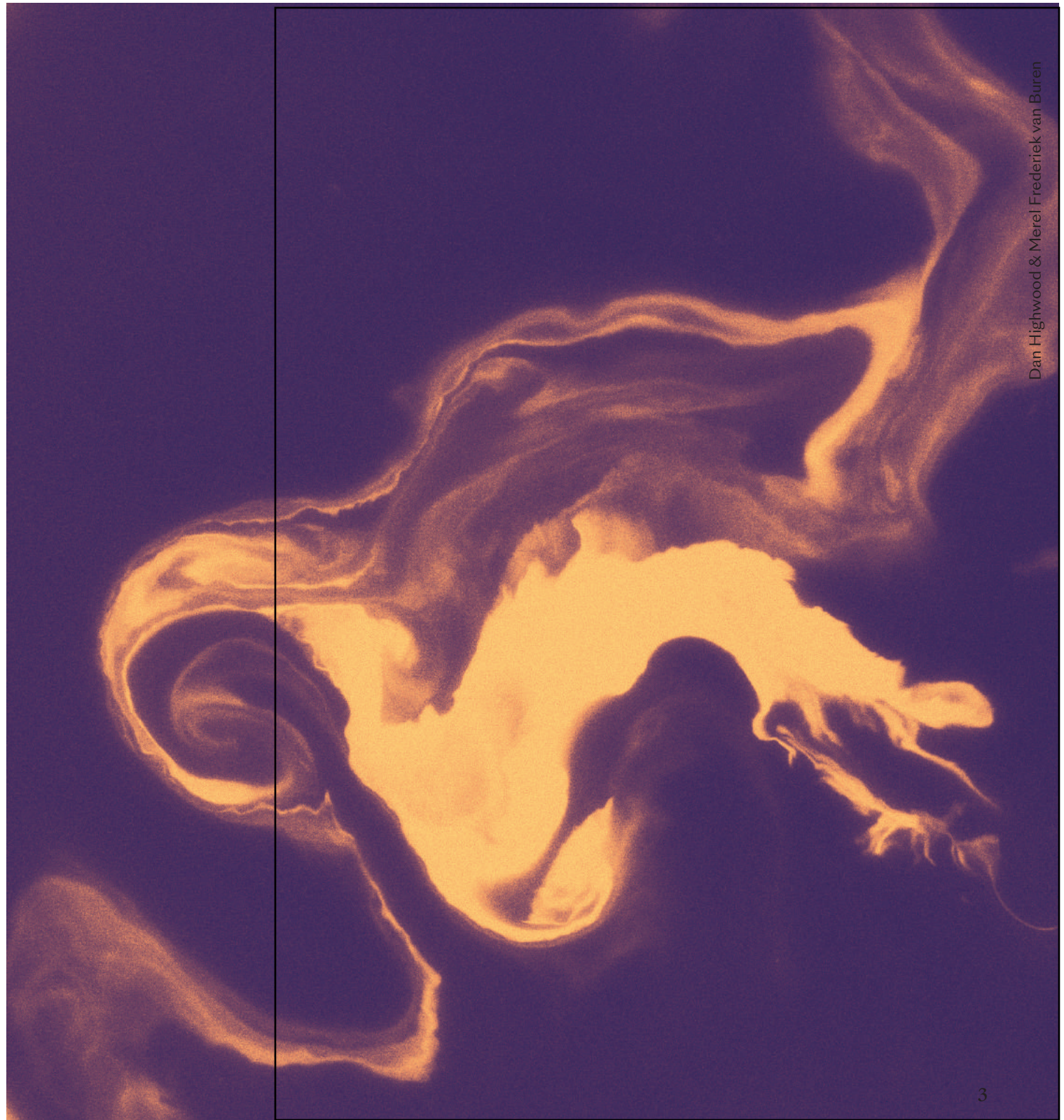
Notice More. Notice More. Notice More.

Written & Designed by:  
Dan Highwood  
Merel Frederiek van Buren

**Notice More**

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# 1.0 Introduction

This small booklet outlines the design process, research and output of a design intervention project. To start, one of the definitions of a design interventions is:

**“Any design project that is initiated by designers with the purpose of having an effect on society, environment, cultural context or to create products to be placed on the market. Design interventions might also have a self-promotional component, but they go beyond mere self promotion.”**

The way we look at this definition, in relation to our final project, is the notion of designing something that will have an impact on society, and even though it can be used as a self-promotional tool on our portfolios, that particular aspect is seen as the secondary gain.

So, essentially a design intervention intervenes in something and has an effect on something within society the environment or cultural context. It is essential to conduct valid, and thorough research before claiming either of these contexts requires any intervention. This particular research has been done in order to design an intervention based on a

solid ground of research. Eventually it was decided to focus on something we both feel a personal connection to, thus Indicating that we are essentially part of the group that will be targeted with this intervention. We both realised that we are more and more curious about the world of meditation, mindfulness and also just the simple notion of realising what happens around us, even the small things. We both commute by bike and noticed we both genuinely could cycle home, without actually realising which route we had taken or what things we had seen on the rout. And we were definitely sure, we were not dreaming and we

both had just cycled 10 kilometres, without noticing.

For this reason, we dove into the word of routine, habit and rituals to uncover why we tend to have routines, why we tend to not notice the small things in life and how much we put ourselves, our brain and essentially our lives, into a full autopilot. And yes, autopilot can be healthy to have, but maybe intervening will eventually make us gain such unexpected and fresh perspectives and experiences.



## 2.0 Process & Research

### Start to see the routine

The start of our process was to analyse our own routines: what are they, what are they filled with and do we notice anything unusual or repetitive and so on. For this reason, we filmed parts of our days, we checked what routes we cycled with our bikes, we analysed our groceries to see if there were any patterns, and even checked how it would feel if we started changing those routines through small interruptions.

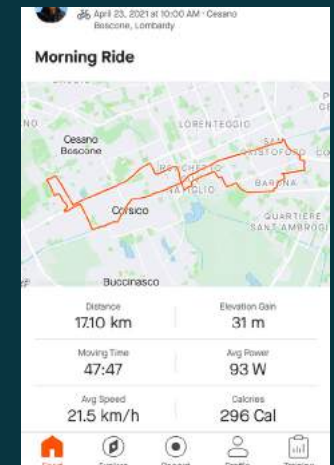
While figuring out our own routines, we realised we were calling some of our routines habits and started researching the difference. The main difference between habits and routines is how aware and intentional you are. In short, the difference between habits and routines are the level of consciousness. The difference between routines and rituals is the attitude behind the action. A habit usually manifests itself as an automatic urge to do something, often triggered by a particular cue. The stronger the connection between the trigger and the habit, the more ingrained the habit. Both habits and routines are regular and repeated actions, but habits happen with little or no conscious thought, whereas routines require a higher degree of intention and effort. The difference between a routine

and a ritual is the attitude behind the action. While routines can be actions that just need to be done—such as making your bed or taking a shower—rituals are viewed as more meaningful practices which have a real sense of purpose (Cunff, 2020). So essentially, the more energy and consciousness is involved, it can be called a ritual. The least energy and consciousness is a habit, and in between that lies the routine.

### Why do we have routines?

Routine also helps with stress. We create a set schedule for doing chores, work tasks, meetings, exercise, paying bills, and all the usual things you need to do. Once this becomes your normal routine, it's easier to accomplish everything, because it becomes a habit."

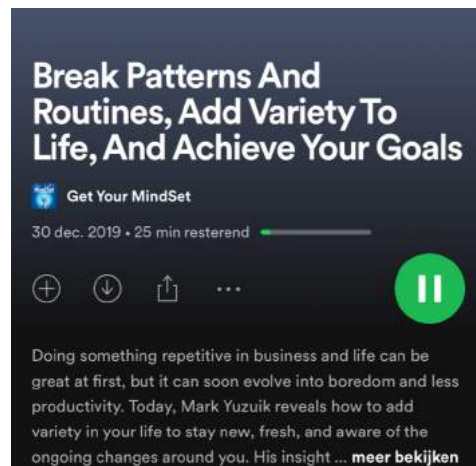
You are essentially also just getting things done that more or less have to be done, with a routine it becomes easier to execute and get done. Career coach and writer Marty Nemko points out: a routine is "something you know you can do well," he tells me, which can be comforting during tough times: "Modern life, increasingly defined by unpredictability, can be anxiety-provoking, and routines provide an anchor of predictability (Robins, n.d.).



## Breaking routines?

After we analysed both our routines, we started to also research why we have routines and what would happen if we were to break them. So, podcasts were brought to the surface, research papers, articles and so on. Some podcasts that we listened to were: Break Patterns, And Routines, Add Variety To life, And Achieve Your Goals (by Get your MindSet, Spotify), Break Your Routines (the Mindset Mentor, Spotify), Episode 5: Keeping Routines While traveling (Autoimmune and You, Spotify) Routines to Keep Your Sanity (Confessions of the Creative Kind, Spotify), Creatures of Habit

As mentioned before, having a routine makes you get the daily things done, but what happens if we were to break it and why do we find it so hard to do so. We discovered that when you regulate your daily actions, you deactivate your “fight or flight” instincts because you’re no longer confronting the unknown. This is why people have such a difficult time with change, and why people who are constant in their habits, experience so much joy: simply, their fear instincts are turned off long enough for them to actually enjoy something (Wiest, 2021). Maria Popova, founder of Brain Pickings said: while routine aims



to make the chaos of everyday life more containable and controllable, ritual aims to imbue the mundane with an element of the magical. The structure of routine comforts us, and the specialness of ritual vitalizes us (Horton, 2019). Thus there are definitely benefits to having routines, rituals or habits, as long as they are healthy of course.

However, what can be the benefits to changing routine because routines can be great! Until they're not. The disadvantages of an unhealthy routine are obvious. But even good, healthy routines can drag us down if we don't break them and re-form them from time to time. Is your routine so pleasant and comforting that you:

- Don't get creative ideas any more?
- Forget the values and goals behind your routine?
- Feel your mind closing down?
- Realize you've lost your balance

When? For instance, what's helpful about the ritual of New Year's resolutions is that we have a specific time of year to reconsider our habits and routines and make a conscious change. Still, any time is a good time to re-evaluate your routines when they begin to smell a bit stale (Selig, 2010). Sir Arthur Conan Doyle once called it “the dull routine of existence.” (Robins, n.d.)

When you break from your routine, you may be more likely to do something different and new. These new experiences can help us gain clarity and help improve brain functioning by getting us out of a habit of doing the same thing repeatedly (Clarity Clinic, 2021).

So for this reason we decided not to focus on not completely breaking routines, but make people realise their routines, reflect upon them and simply to become aware of them. Because doing something for a while or “always having done it this way” does not mean you have been doing something that benefits you. Therefore, we consider it important to create a sense of awareness.

**Sir Arthur Conan Doyle [...] “the dull routine of existence.”**

**Life unfolds in the present. But so often, we let the present slip away, allowing time to rush past unobserved and unseized, and squandering the precious seconds of our lives as we worry about the future and ruminate about what's past. "We're living in a world that contributes in a major way to mental fragmentation, disintegration, distraction, decoherence," says Buddhist scholar B. Alan Wallace. We're always doing something, and we allow little time to practice stillness and calm (Dixit, 2008).**

## Survey

In order to get a better understanding of what people, mostly close to us, thought of having routines, breaking routines, if they considered them positive or negative and if they considered change as something that would make them gain something positive and so on.

To put our results into perspective, only 34 people responded and we solely used it to gather some examples of thoughts of people. The age group that eventually answered were: 23 - 61 years old and they were all from various countries like Italy, Germany, Netherlands, America, Denmark, Russia, Spain, England, Guatemala.

One of the very first questions was: How would you define a routine? And even though as mentioned before, routines do help our daily lives, the respondents did acknowledge the slightly negative side of having one. Some answers were:

- Like being in a cage;
- A pattern of behaviour or tasks;
- Consistently or pattern of actions;
- A sequence of events;
- A habit, an everyday thing;
- Something that is the same.

**Do you desire to  
make small changes  
to your routine?**

**91% 09%**

yes

no

What changes to you desire to make?

- More time to sleep and dedicate to my hobbies;
- Wake up earlier;
- Trying different groceries, taking different routes in the city, having different conversations, visiting different websites, less time on social media, eating more fruit;
- Less screen time, earlier bed time, keep a journal;
- I'd like to change country just to try something really new;
- Be more open to change.

**Do you ever feel  
on autopilot?**

**80% 20%**

yes

no

How does it make you feel?

- Numb;
- Bored;
- Comforted



## What are the main pros and cons of having a routine?

### Pros

- Peace of mind
- Get things done
- Gives life structure

### Cons

- Life becomes boring
- You have less new experiences
- You don't interact with new things
- You don't live in the moment

## In short, the main findings.

Do not abandon routines completely. People need routines to be able to get the usual things done without over thinking and becoming too stressed.

Use momentum to implement change, like when you move houses or it is New Years eve. Take advantage of it.

You need to see something different, or feel something different, in order to want it and become curious.

The goal is to wake up the inner working of our mental, emotional and physical processes and notice them without judgement.

New experiences help us gain clarity, improve brain functioning if we step off our daily routine. Doing the same thing makes us numb and unaware.

Trigger, behaviour, reward, repeat. Notice the urge, get curious, feel joy of letting go, repeat.

We have routines because our body thinks it keeps us alive.

## So where did this lead us?



## The narrowed down focus

After all this research, we acknowledged the fact that it might be more beneficial for people to just notice their routine and become aware of it, and yes the overused word of the 21st century, be mindful about it.

In order to feel more in control of our minds and our lives, to find the sense of balance that eludes us, we need to step out of this current, to pause, and, as Kabat-Zinn puts it, to “rest in stillness—to stop doing and focus on just being.” We need to live more in the moment. Living in the moment—also called mindfulness—is a state of active, open, intentional attention on the present. When you become mindful, you realize that you are not your thoughts; you become an observer of your thoughts from moment to moment without judging them. Mindfulness involves being with your thoughts as they are, neither grasping at them nor pushing them away. Instead of letting your life go by without living it, you awaken to experience (Dixit, 2008).

Cultivating a non-judgemental awareness of the present bestows a host of benefits. Mindful people are happier, more exuberant, more empathetic, and more secure. They have higher self-esteem and

are more accepting of their own weaknesses. Anchoring awareness in the here and now reduces the kinds of impulsivity and reactivity that underlie depression, binge eating, and attention problems (Dixit, 2008).

We believe that if we give people practices inspired by mindfulness techniques, they can in a non-judgemental manner reflect upon their own routines and decide for themselves if they desire or require any changes.

If you were to implement mindful routines or mindful rituals into your daily life, the following things can be examples of that, and it essentially all comes down to mindfully, consciously doing the things you do, even the small tasks:

- Sit in the morning. When you wake up, in the quiet of the morning, perhaps as your coffee is brewing, get a small cushion and sit for a bit;
- Brush your teeth, and only brush your teeth, no drifting off;
- Eat mindfully, eat without TV or phone;
- Walk slowly;
- Look at someone gratefully
- Work with focus, one task at a time; It is about training your mind to also just live today, not tomorrow, not yesterday, but now. It is about

**Mindful routines; encourage people to realise and notice their routines, rituals and habits instead of telling them what to do.**

reminding yourself to be conscious, which in return can make you decide to change certain aspects of your life that you haven't questioned before (Babauta, 2011)(Christian, 2020).

## 3.0 Concept

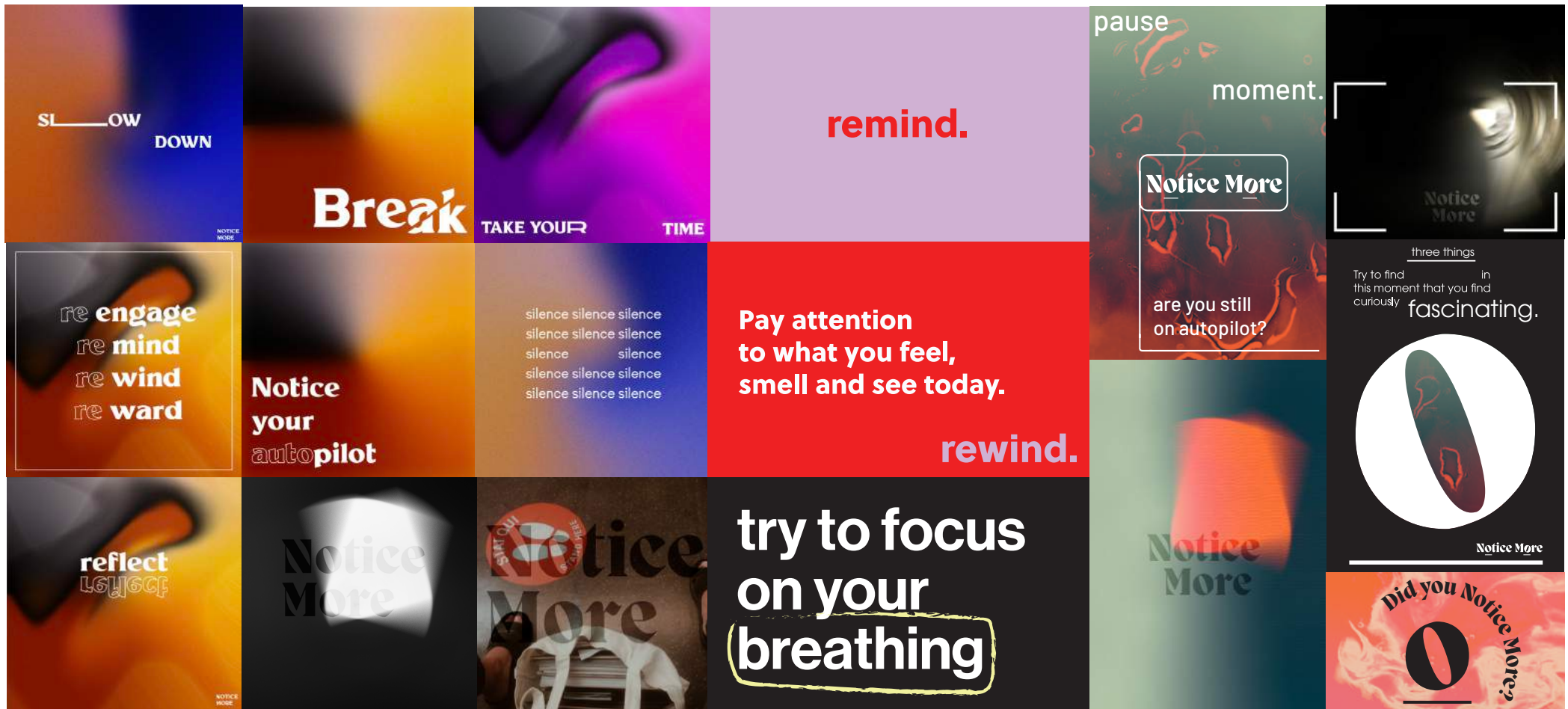
We want to make people more aware of their routines. Make them realise they have a routine, realise what they do in that routine. So they can figure out for themselves it is beneficial for them, making them go where they want to be if it makes them happy for instance. We want to encourage mindfulness in order for this realisation to happen, which could result in people noticing more around them.

The enemy is autopilot - be conscious of what you put on autopilot and not. Even though your autopilot helps you think less, get things done. However, getting rid of routines or the autopilot is not the goal, but consciously picking what goes where, consciously realising what you are doing, appreciating what you are doing and maybe eventually be encouraged to **Notice More.**

## The Ultimate Goal

**We want to encourage people to use practical tools that makes them live a more conscious, aware and present life.**

We offer practical tools that encourage a conscious, aware and present life, which ultimately makes a person mindfully think about their own life, routines, thoughts and feelings. As a result, they can gain new unexpected perspectives, and perspectives. Be aware of your routine - stop and notice.



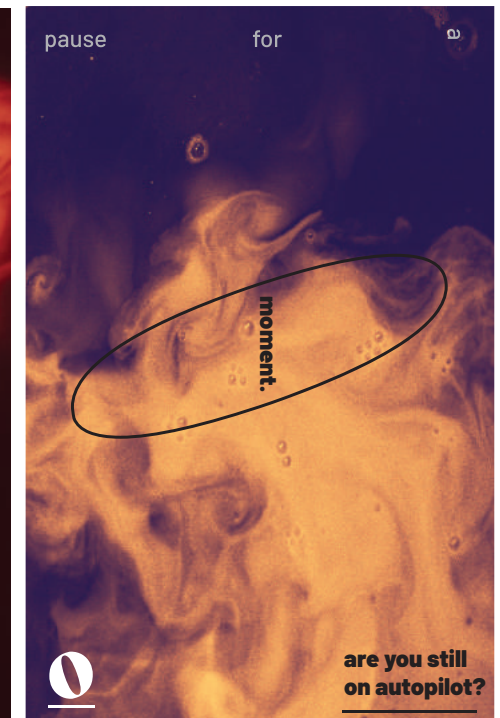
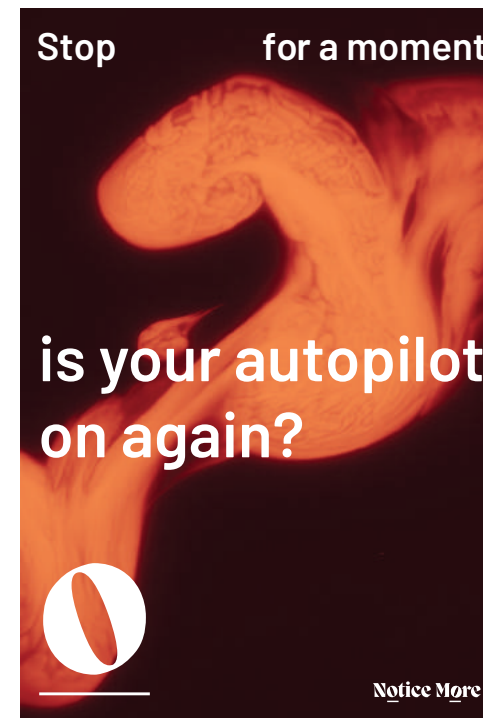
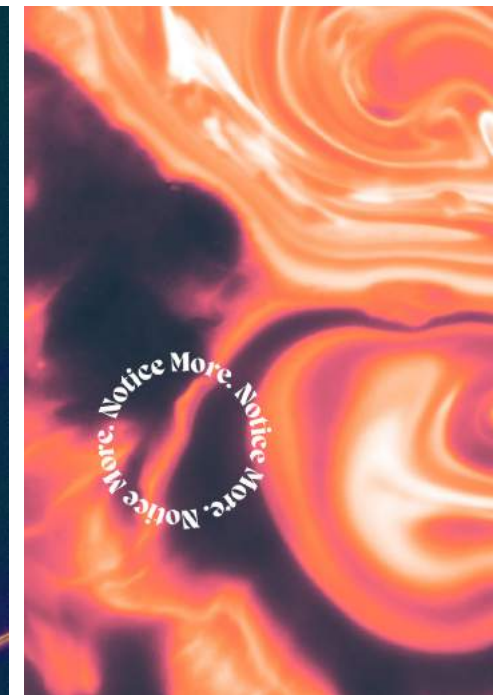
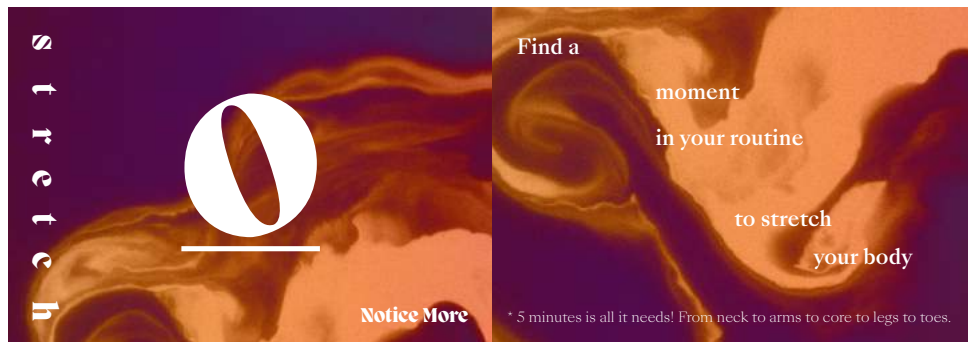
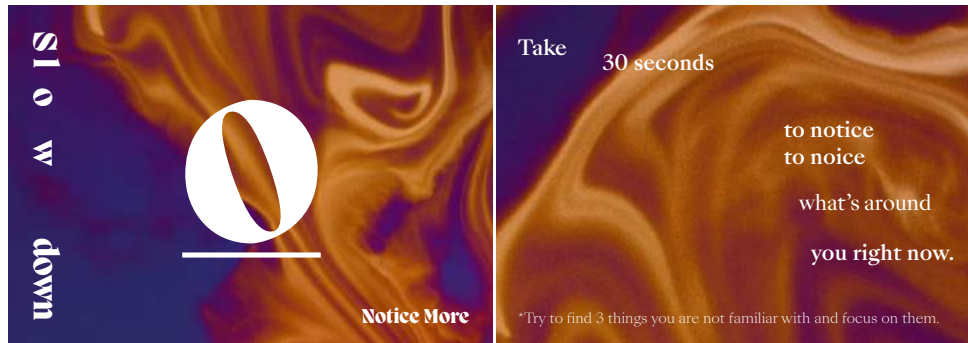
## Design Process & Attempts

We quickly want to show the development of the start of our design journey till the end. So with all of these concepts we tried to keep in mind to not follow the world of mindfulness too much but also

to create a frame that can highlight aspects of images, thus encourage people to notice that piece. We started using images with blurred blending modes, high contrast, gradients and so on. Also, we played

around with our tag line/logo in order to see how it can be part of the narration and make people understand why the images look the way they do (because they were already rather abstract).







## 4.0 Output

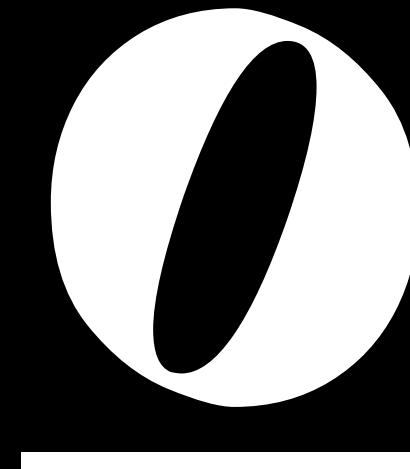
### Logo & Name

Several names were being thrown around such as realise, notice rewind, remind and pause. We realised it was important that the name clearly guides people into what the concept is about, because it is rather deep and can be a vague field to step into. For that reason, 'Notice More', was eventually chosen as the name for this project.

In order to visualise this notice more a little more we switched the orientation of the one 'o' mirrored it and underlined it to guide people into what they could potentially notice in life as well.

**Notice More**  
**Notice More**

# Notice More



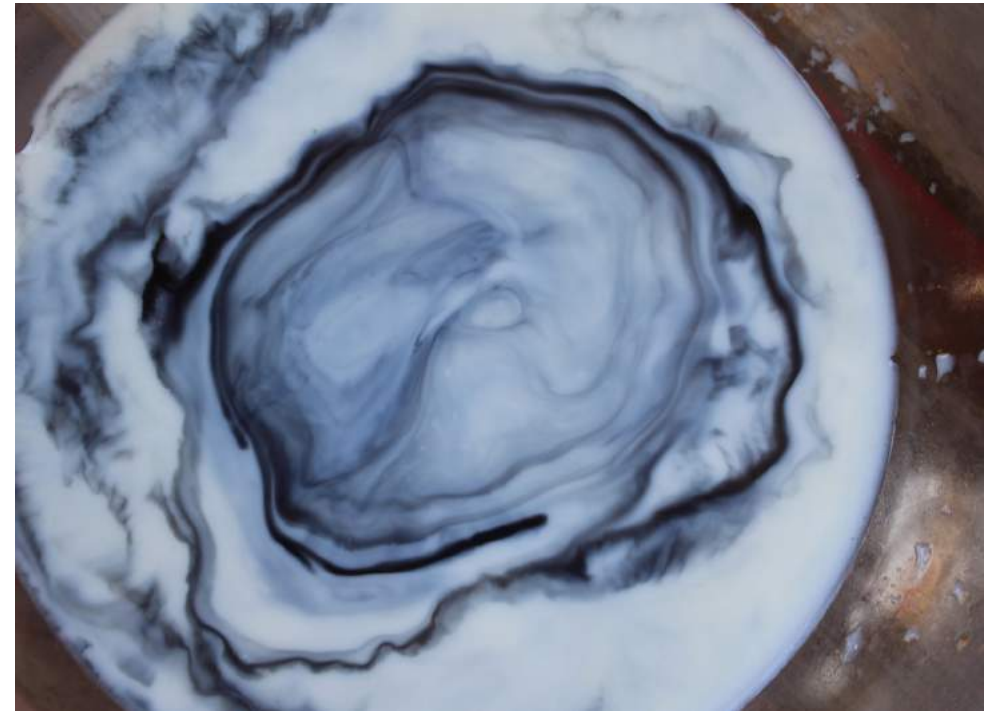
The mirrored 'o' is being used  
as a logo on its own,

## Photography

It was decided to use abstract photography to represent the notion of being in 'your' own mind, and being in 'your' present moment. These photos express a certain state of mind and emotions.

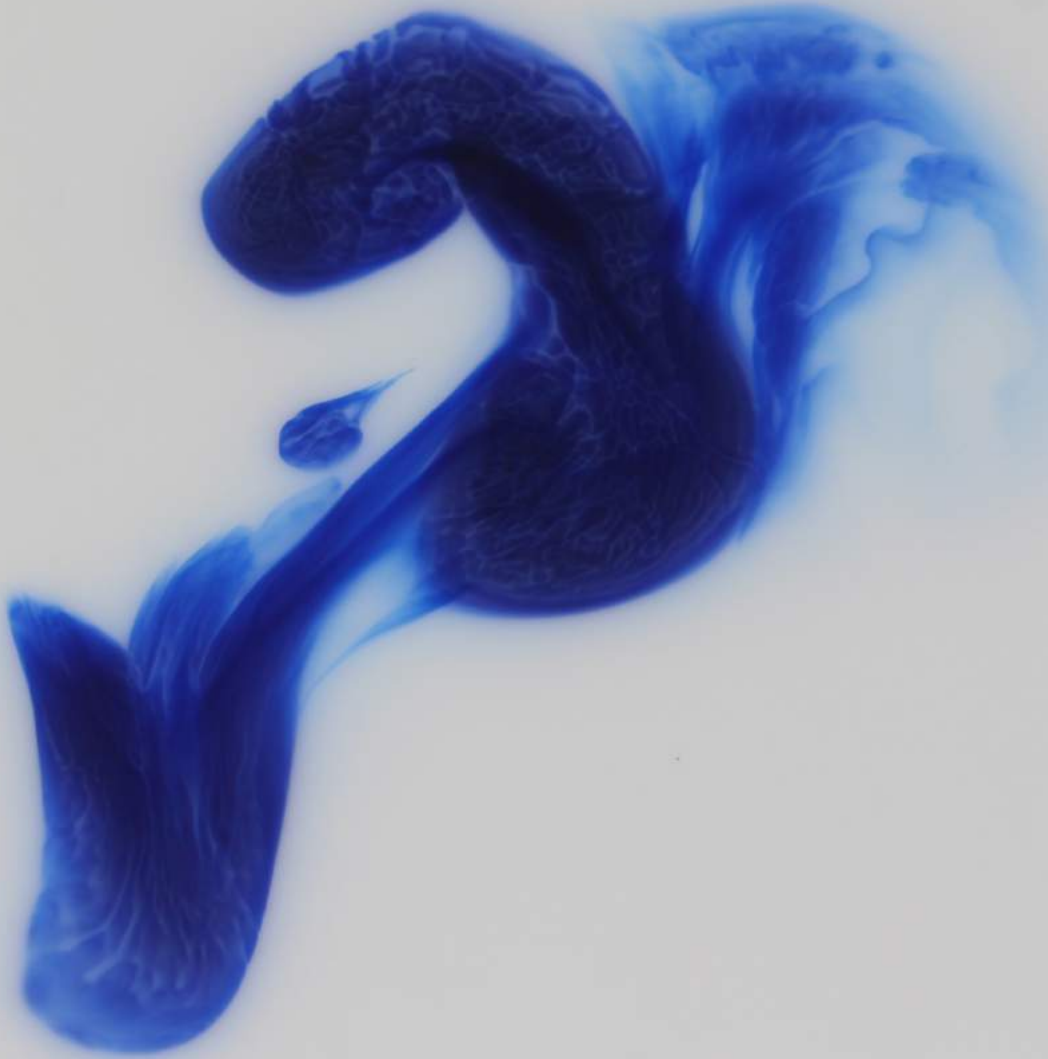
It was chosen to go for an experimental approach to create these images by mixing milk, ink, soap, spray paint, water paint, wine, and sunlight. Eventually, we used our own four colours to colour the images on Photoshop. The result is a photograph of noticing the small details in life - stopping and paying attention to the things we could miss when usually on autopilot.

**These photos express  
a certain state of mind  
and emotions.**

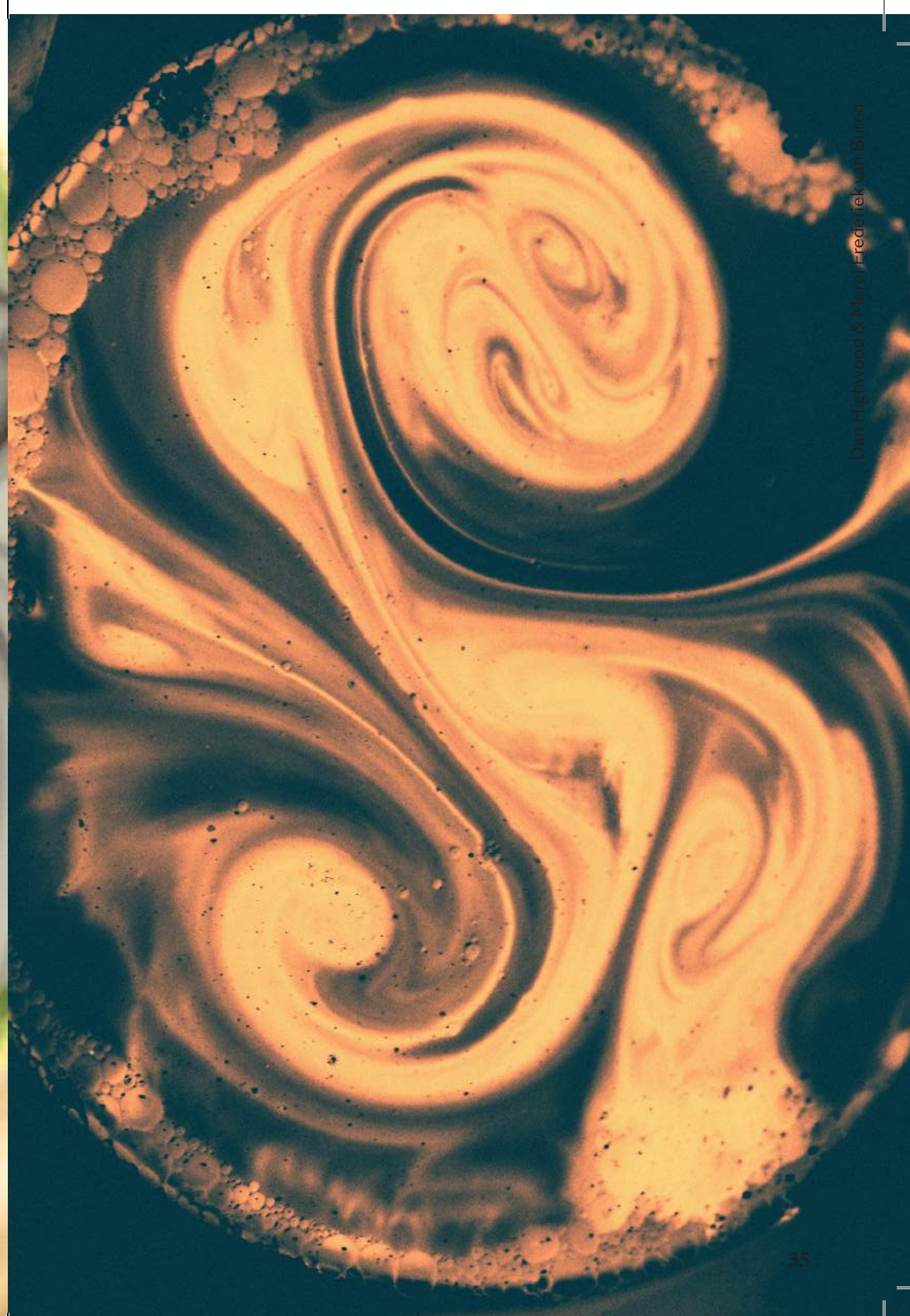




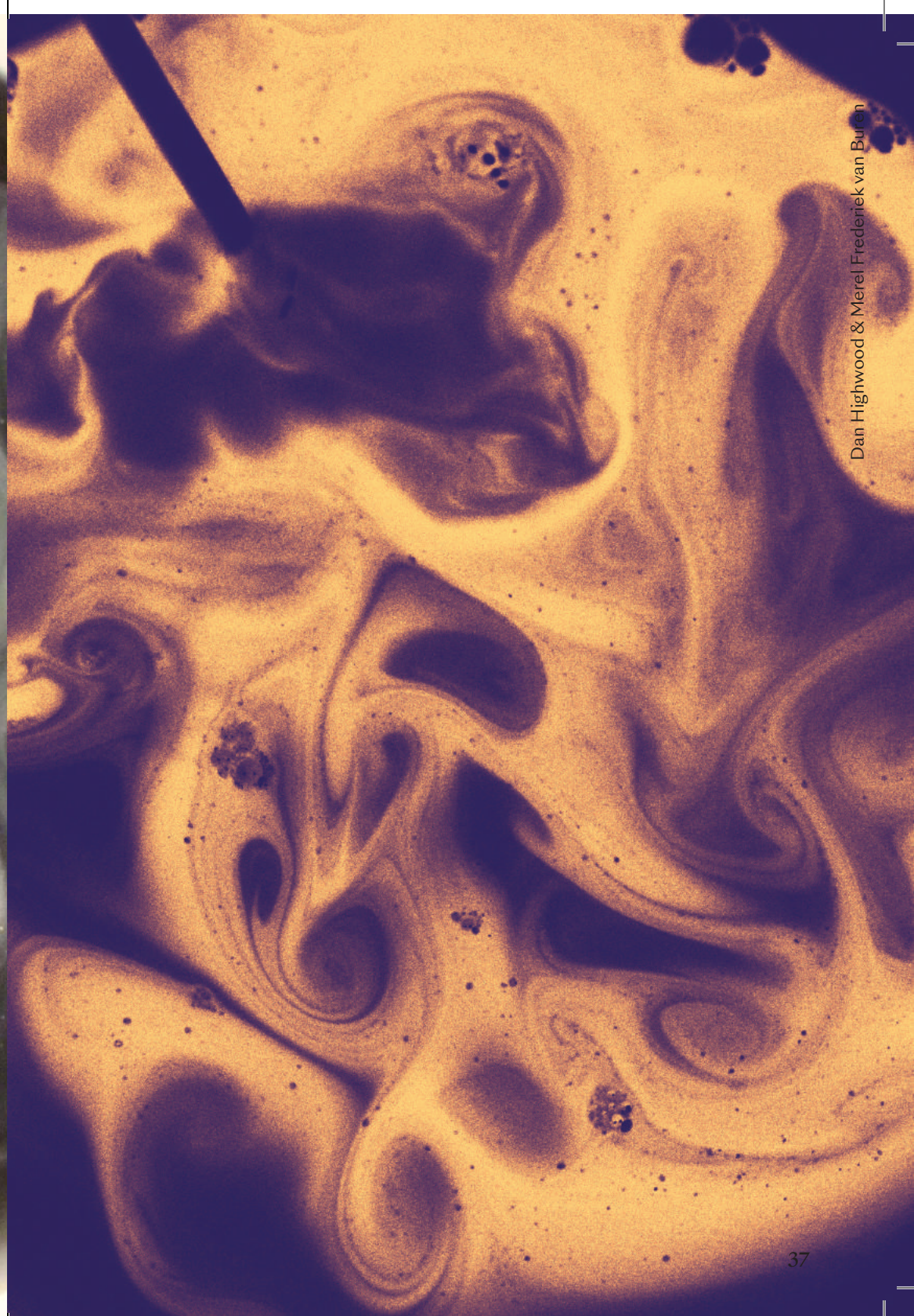








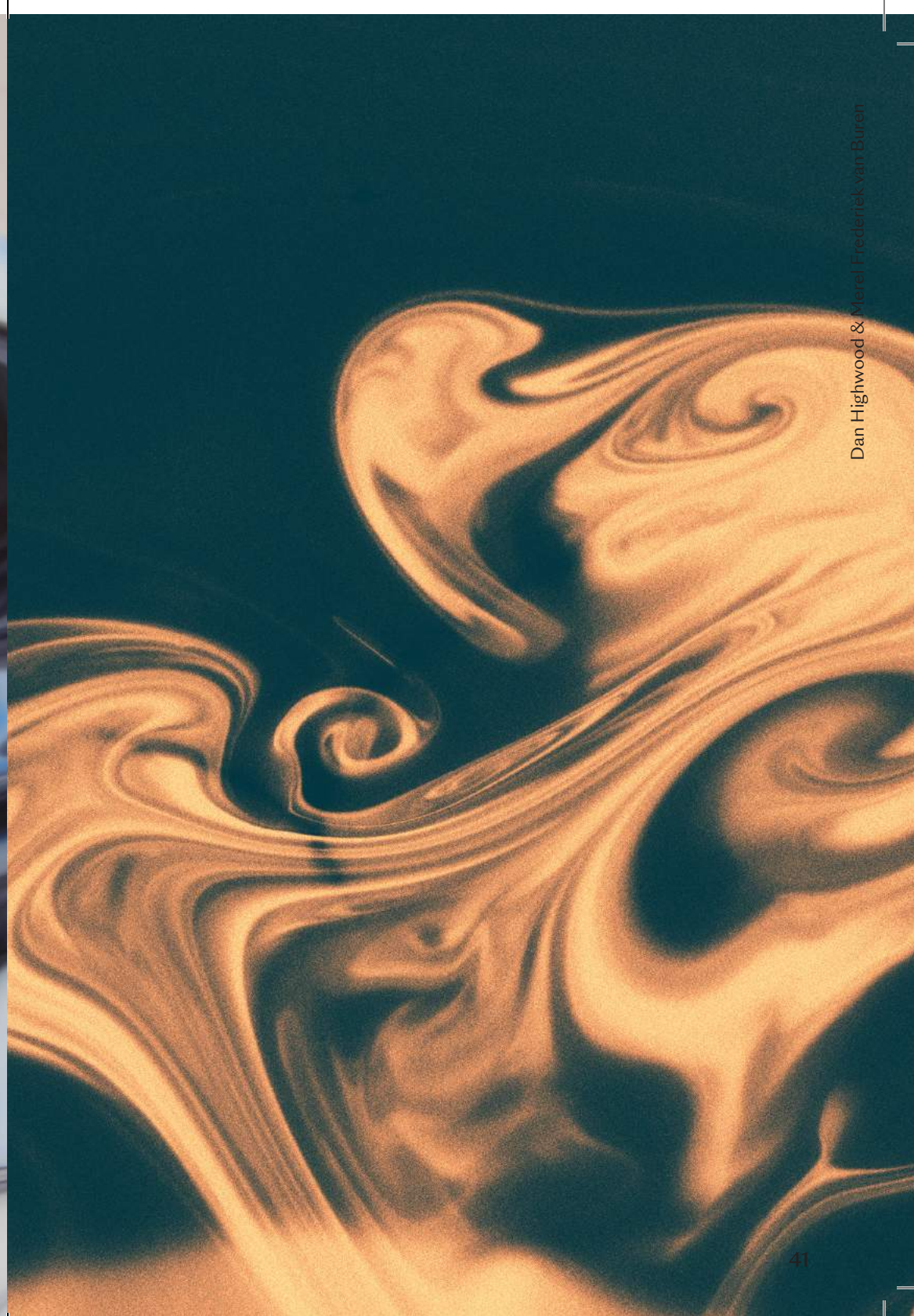




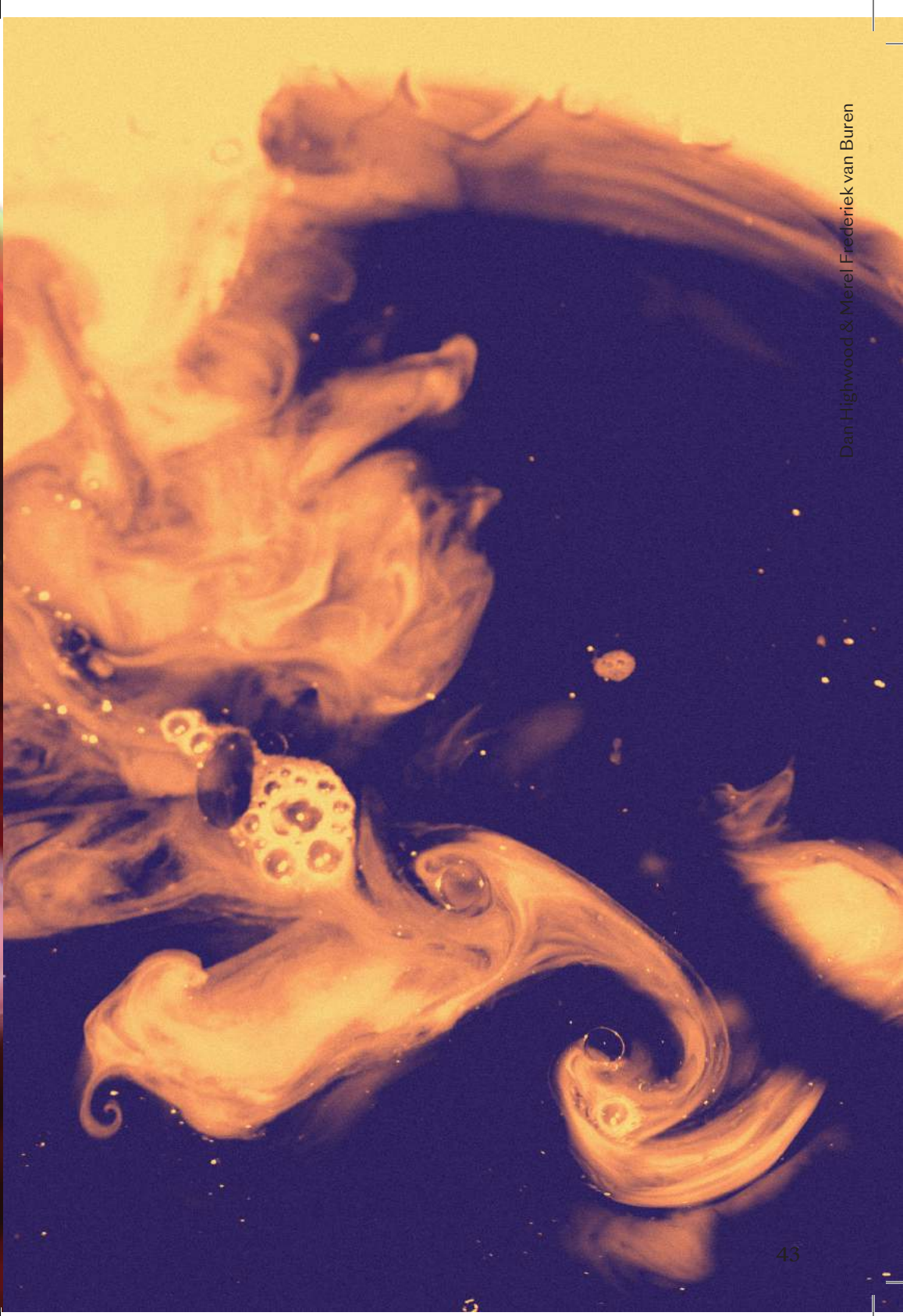
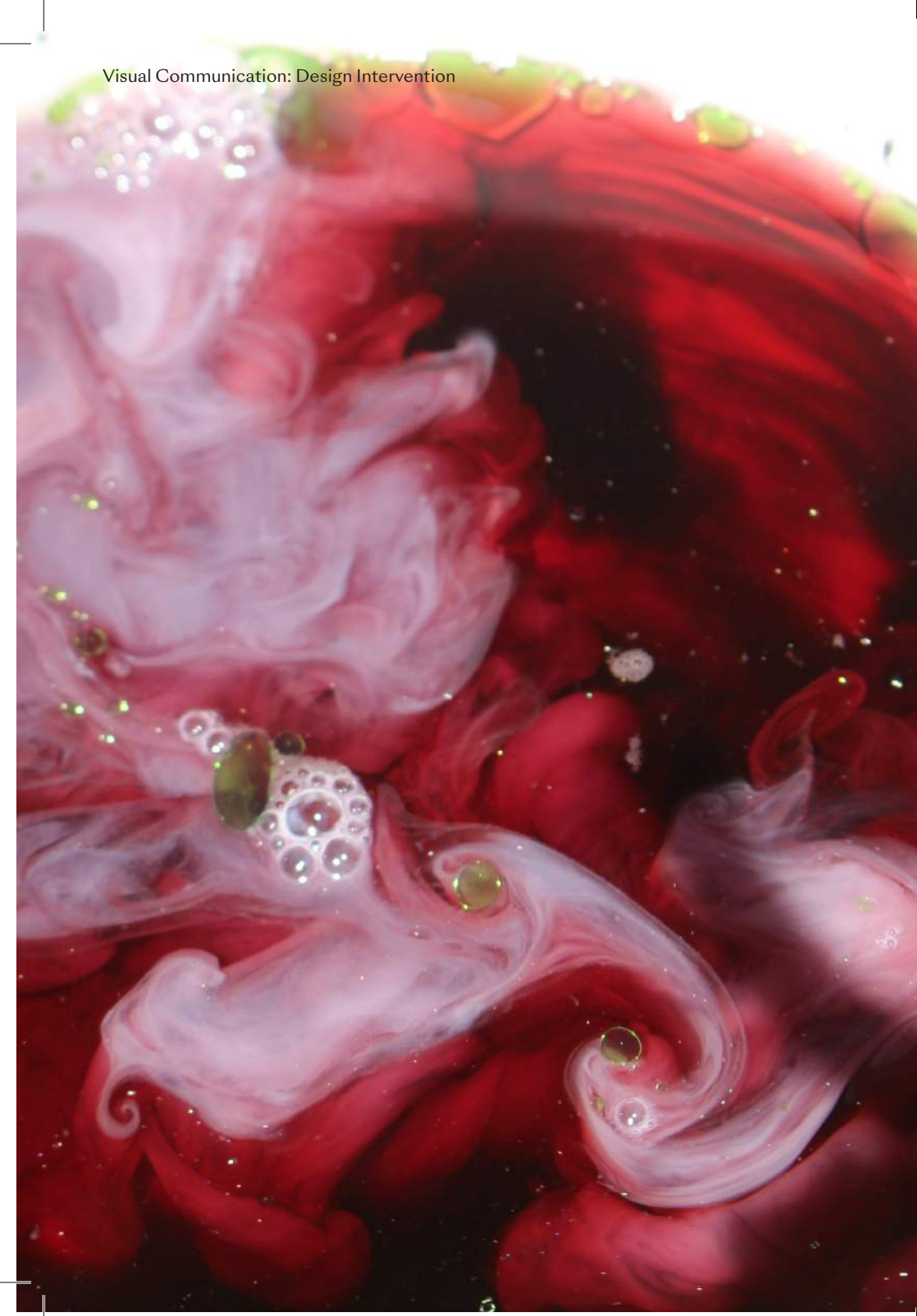




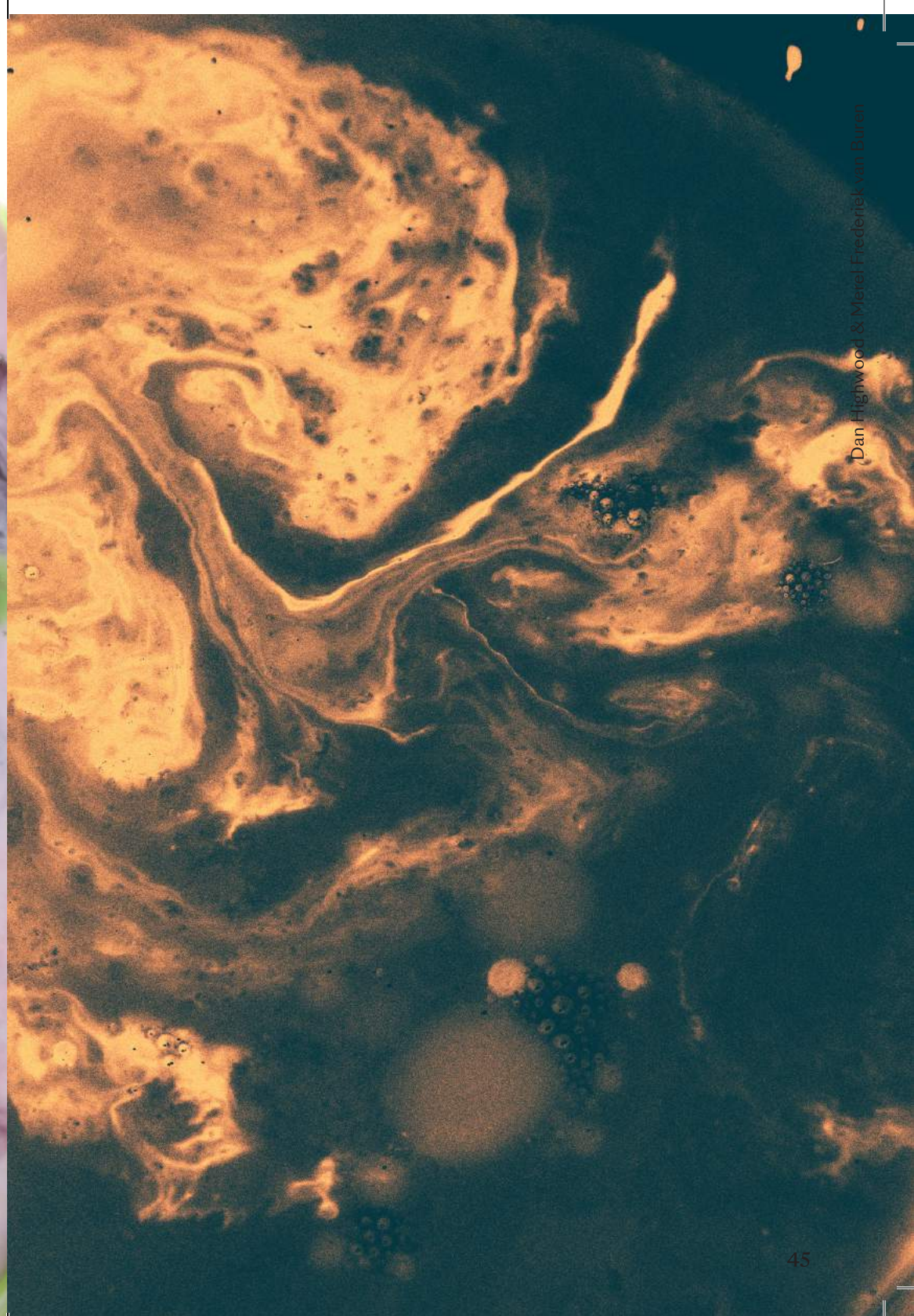




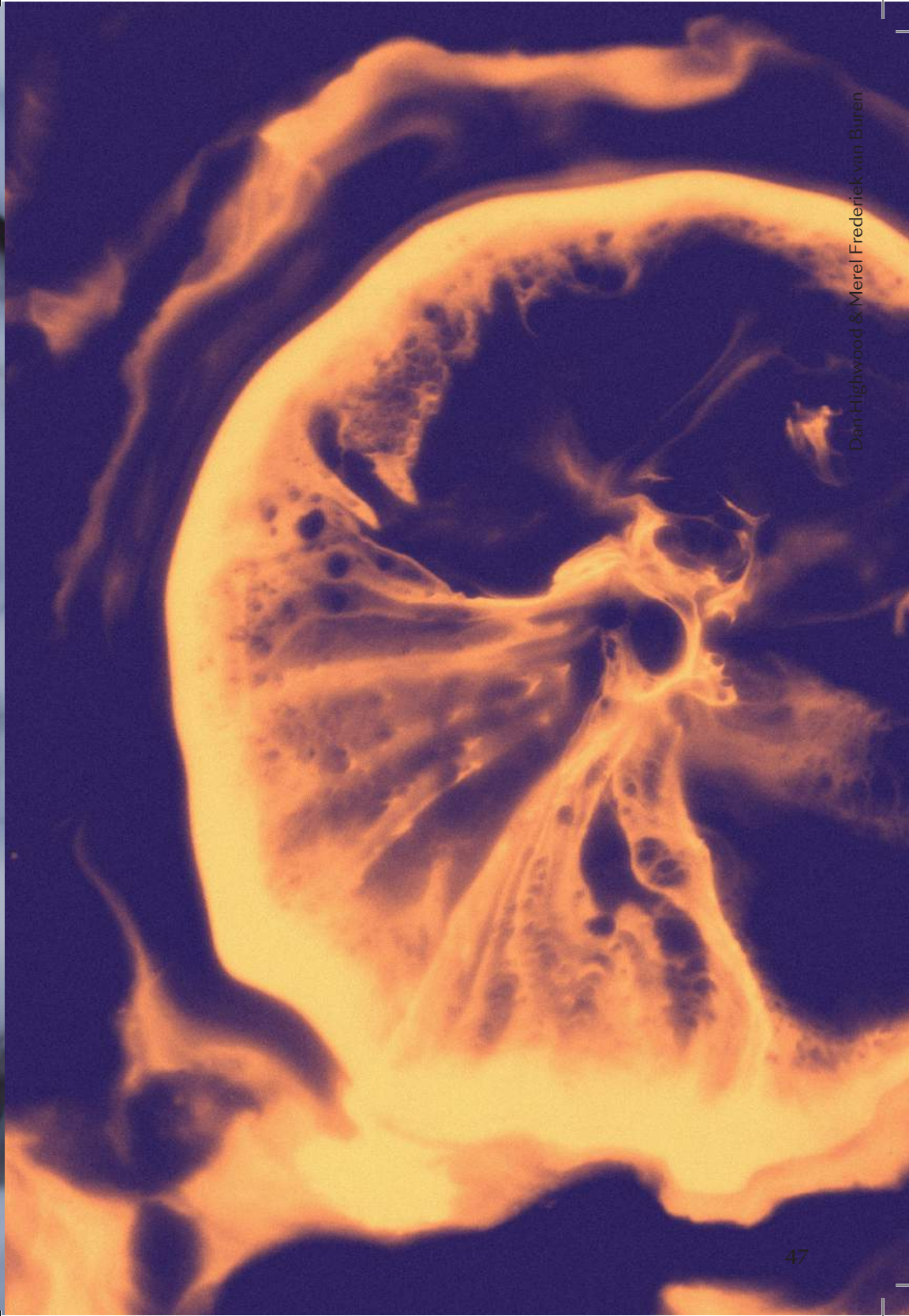
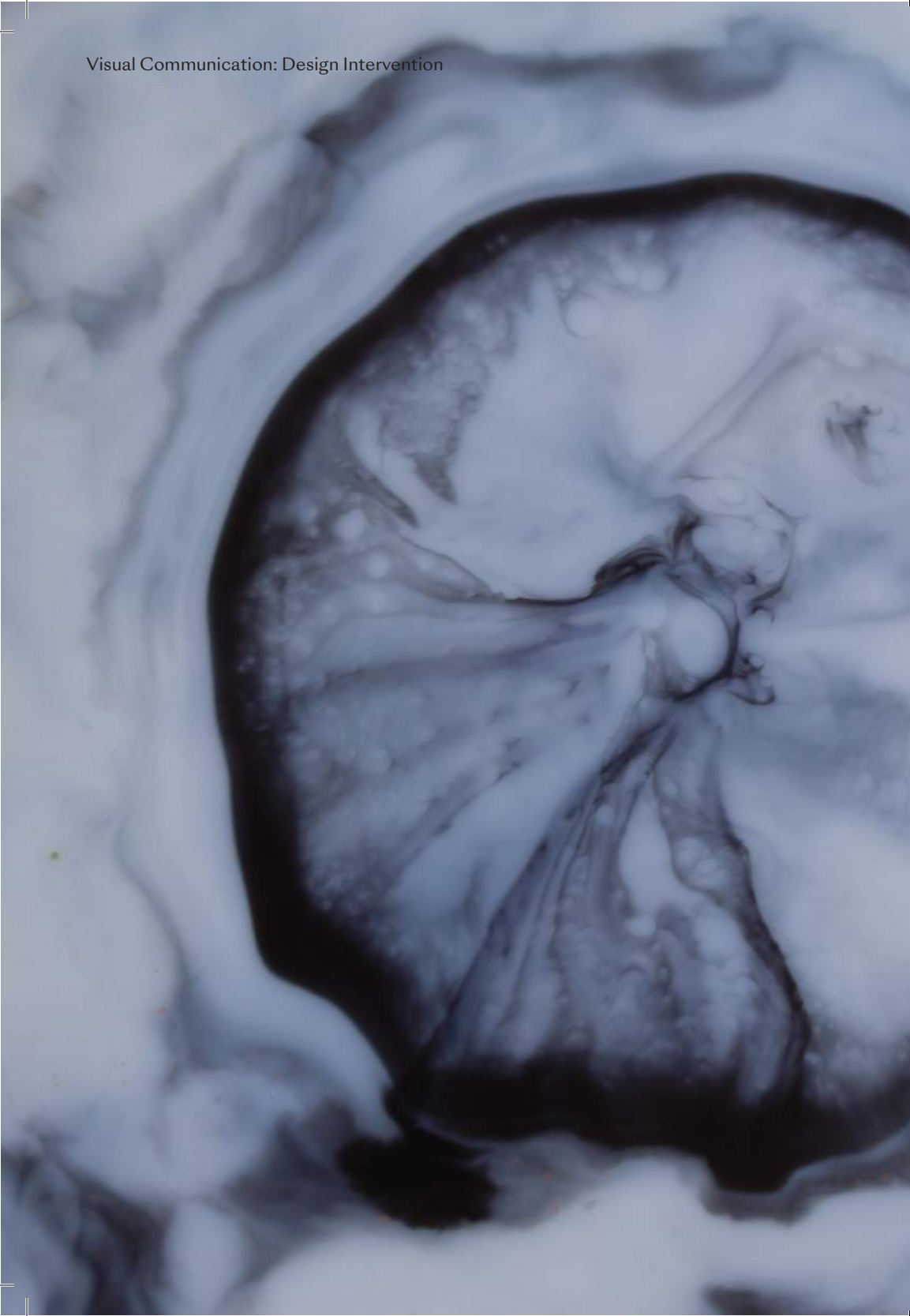














Notice More. Notice More. Notice More.

Notice More. Notice More. Notice More.

Dan Highwood & Merel Frederiek van Buren

This stamp is an extension of the logo which can be used to highlight certain places on our imagery to amplify the notion of “noticing more”. It can highlight unexpected places on the image, and the stickers on which this stamp is used as well, people can use it to highlight themselves places to notice more

## Colours

The colours were chosen to be able to make elements stand out by using light on the dark colours in order to extend the notion of noticing something unexpected.

Also, the colours were chosen to contrast with the standard of world of mindfulness. One of the aims of the project is to attract that aren't necessarily into this entire world and would in some sense need a little push to start trying. Which is why the colours are not pastel, or too soft. They create, in a sense, a more bolder look, but because all of them do not have too high in hue, they still have an overall calming effect.

CMYK (0, 50, 60, 0)



CMYK (0, 10, 50, 0)



CMYK (95, 60, 50, 55)



CMYK(100, 100, 25, 20)



## Layout

The layout is experimental and makes the reader read the text with more focus and attention, because the words move around on the page. The orientation makes you slow down, it adds more meaning to the content you are reading. The images you see below were used as inspiration for this idea.



## 4.0 Output

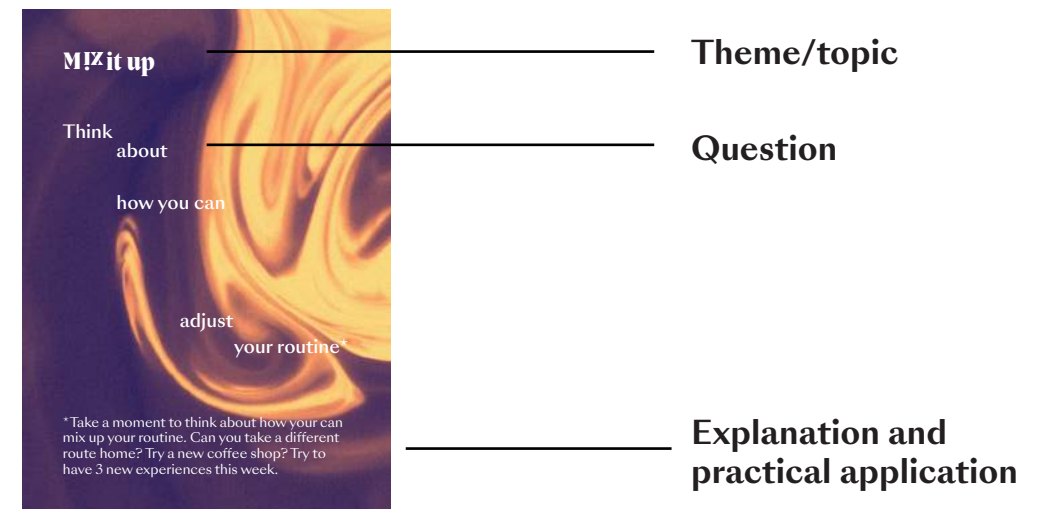
We want to encourage people to become more aware of their routines. Make them realise they have a routine, realise what they do in that routine. So they can figure out for themselves if it is beneficial for them, making them go where they want to be if it makes them happy for instance. We also want to encourage this sense of consciousness and awareness by offering practical tools in order for this realisation to happen, which could result in people noticing more around them.

The enemy is essentially autopilot - be conscious of what you put on autopilot and not. Even though your autopilot helps you think less, gets things done. However, getting rid of routines or the autopilot is not the goal, but consciously picking what goes where, consciously realising what you are doing, appreciating what you are doing and maybe eventually it will essential train a person to simply **Notice More.**

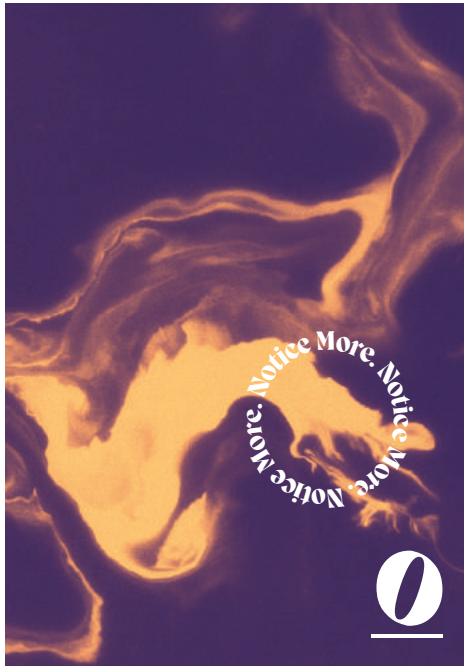
As mentioned before, we provide people with a certain set of tools in order to be able to notice more in life by making people more conscious about life, their actions, their emotions and so on.

### Cards

These tools, these practices, were applied on a set of cards that can be read wherever you like. At home, on the metro, at work, on your walk and so on. They each have a specific focus, it asks you a certain question and on the bottom of the card you will find a slightly more practical detailed explanation of what you could do in order to answer this question for yourself.







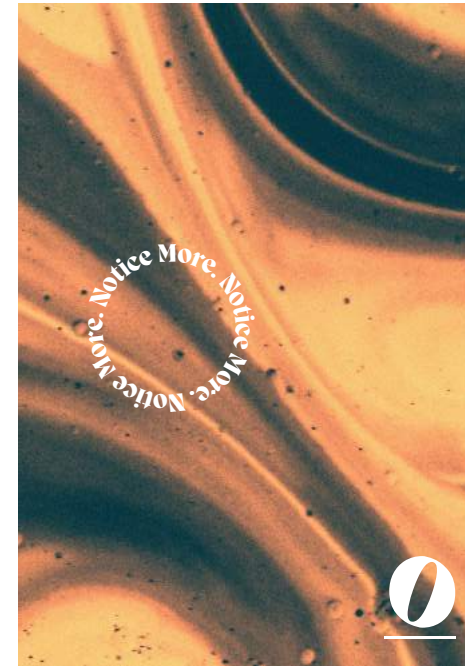
## Slowmotion walking

Try to walk consciously at any given moment.

Slower  
Faster  
Subtle changes  
Different balance.

How does it feel?\*

\*Try to fully experience the sensation of walking by just picking a moment to notice each step. Make subtle changes in speed, balance or rhythm.



## Stretched moments

Find a moment in your routine

to stretch your body.\*

\*Try to stretch parts of your body but do it consciously: from neck, to arms, back, legs, and toes. Find what makes you comfortable and notice how it feels.



## Listen even more

Having a conversation? Try to focus on the sound of their voice

and take one step further

into listening carefully.\*

\*During conversation you might sometimes not listen to the fullest. Try to focus on the sound of their voice, how they move and carefully listen to what is actually being told.



## 20 / 20 vision

Exercise your eyes, try to

notice the details of something in the

distance.\*

\*During screen time, try to look at something 20 meters away for 20 seconds every 20 minutes. Exercise your eyes. What are you looking at? Notice it.

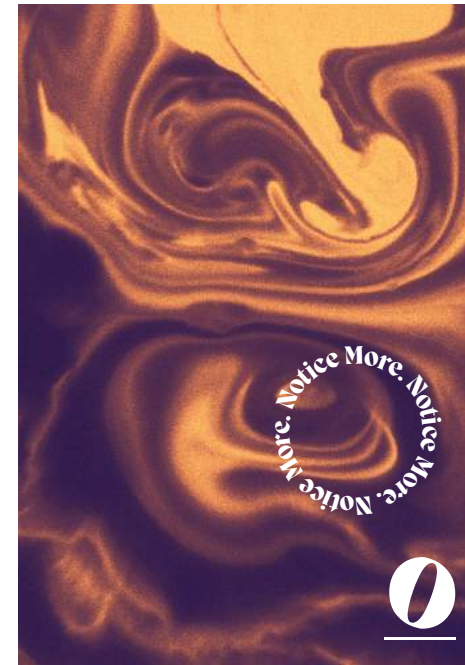




**Body scan**

Take a moment  
to notice  
your body  
and  
what is  
happening.\*

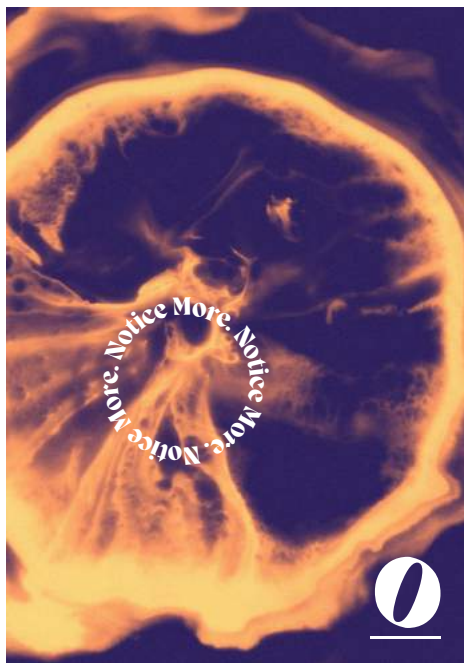
\*Spend a minute scanning your body from head to toe. How does it feel? Heavy or light? Hot or cold? Try to be aware of each part.



**Don't just look**

Do not just look at the tree  
actually go  
and  
touch it.\*

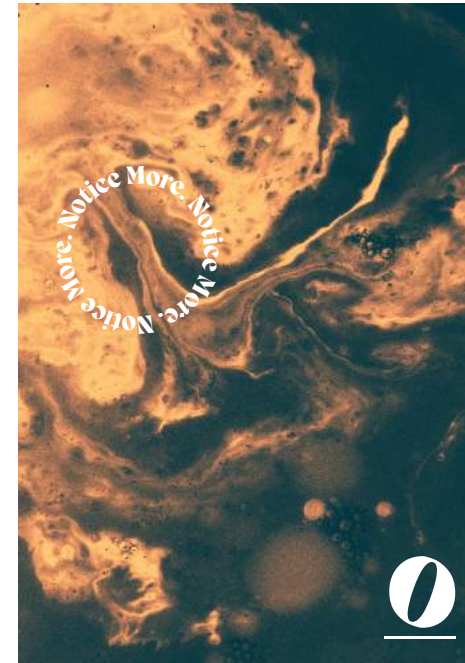
\*Whenever you pass by something beautiful try to find a moment to appreciate it more deeply. Don't just look at the tree, touch the leaves and just notice it.



**Watch what you Watch**

What you see  
influences what you think  
influences what you say  
influences what you do  
and eventually  
who you are.\*

\*When you're next browsing the internet try to choose beneficial content to fill your mind with. From youtube videos to music - notice what you are consuming.



**Thank fully**

What can you be  
thankful for  
today?

Take 20 seconds  
to appreciate  
just  
one  
thing.\*

\*In your daily routine you might take things for granted. Like a functioning phone charger or great shower. Before some meals, take 20 seconds to appreciate the moment.

## Stickers

Catching yourself forgetting to notice and helping yourself not to, is not a task that is easy, and we know all too well. For this reason, we have provided people with a set of stickers they can place anywhere in their house to remind themselves to notice, or to go back to the cards to try some new themes. They can place them on their mirrors, on the wall, on the table, on their skateboard, on their milk carton, on the car, on the microwave and essentially any place needed. Or, people can simply spread them on the street to encourage others to notice more or catch themselves on the way to work.











**Notice More**

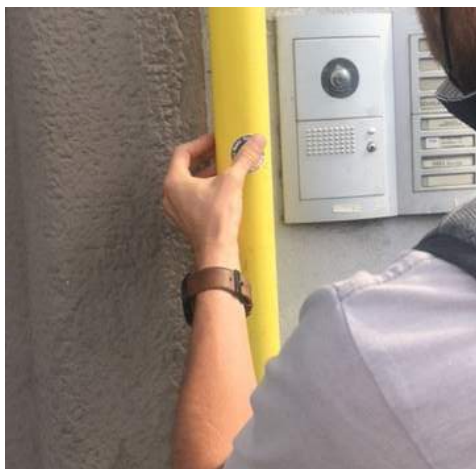
**Notice More**

**Notice More**

**Notice More**





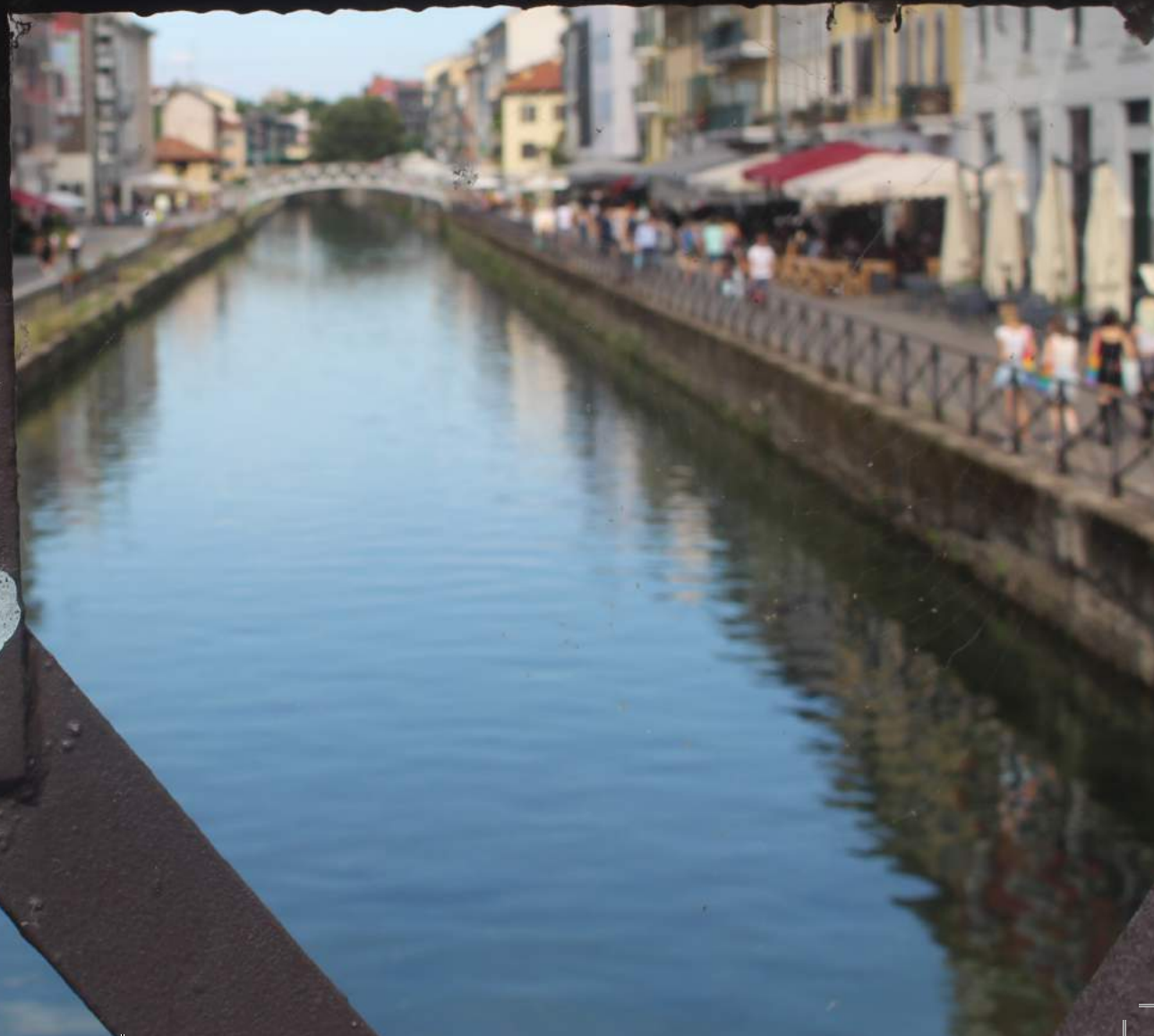






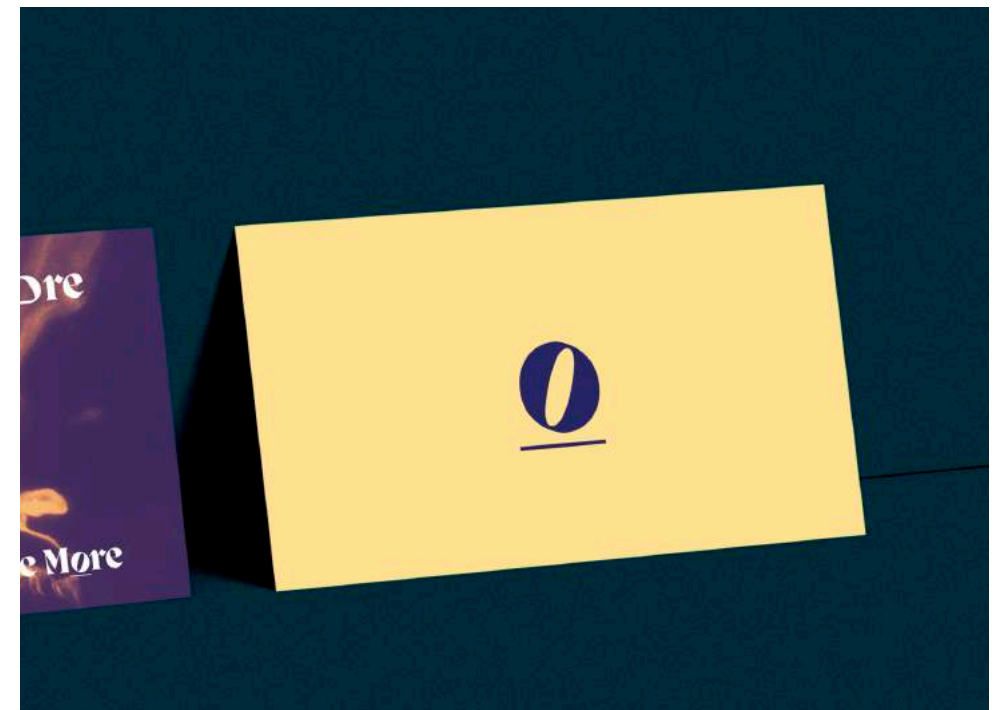
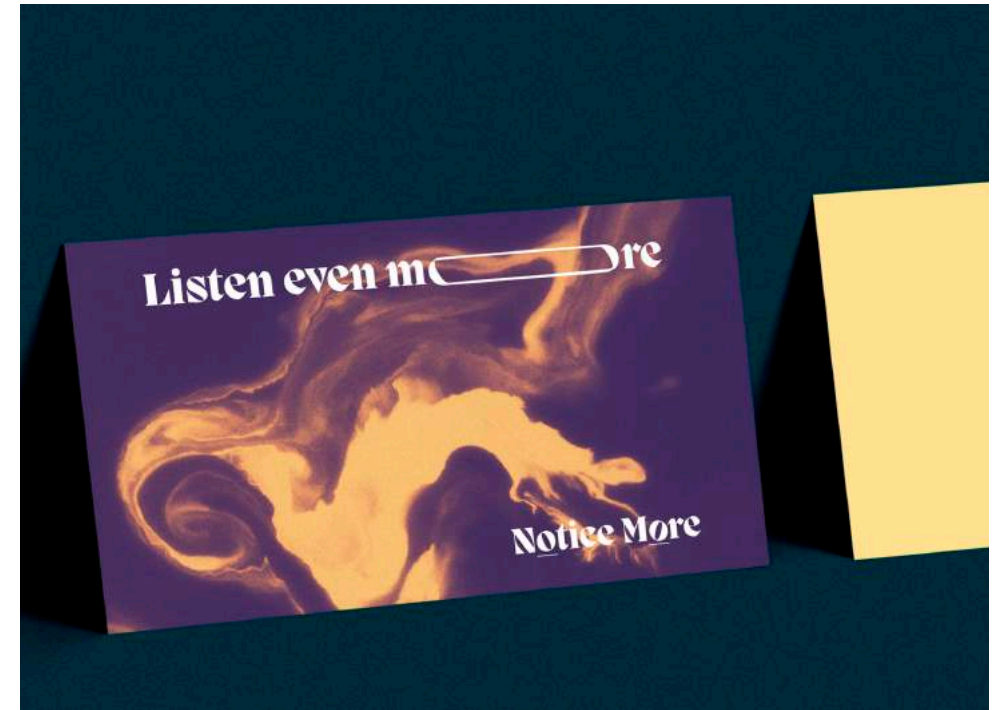


PULS XIT



## The Reminder Card

Stickers are a more permanent mark somewhere in your surroundings and we wanted to provide a more flexible tool to bring along that does not necessarily have to be put in one place and stick there forever before throwing it out eventually. Therefore, an extra small card has been designed, simply with one of the theme names on top, with the notice more logo, colours and imagery that fits exactly in your wallet like a business card. You can put it behind your ID-card or credit card and whenever you take it out to use it, this little card pops out to give you a small reminder







Front



Back

## Booklet

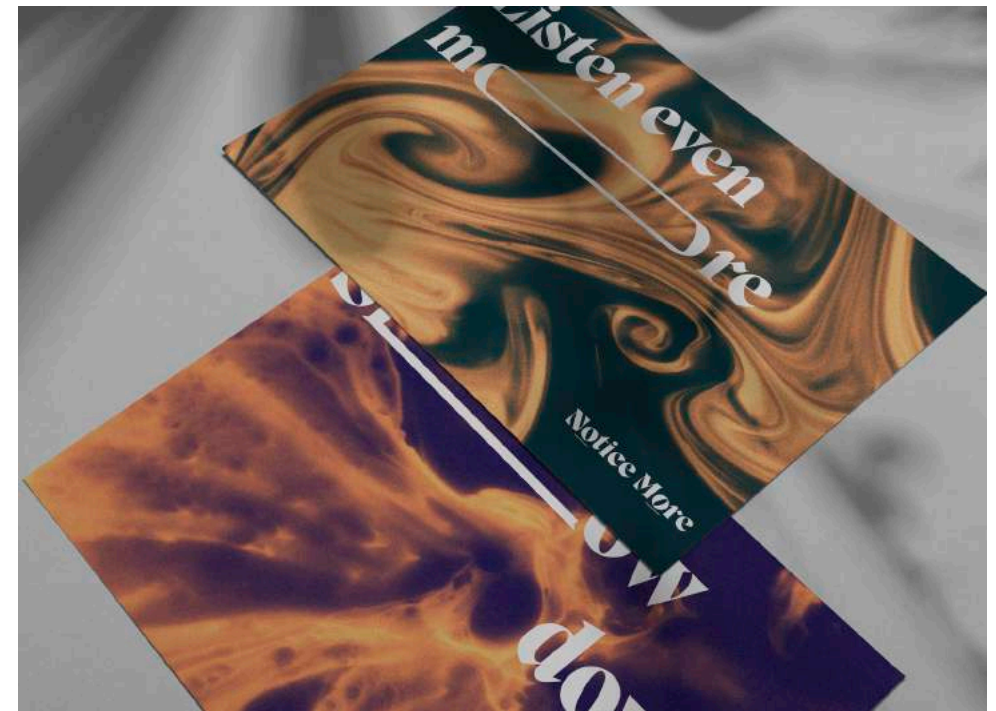
The allows people to write down their thoughts in the notebook session. The other half explains why we think people should be encouraged to try to notice more and it passes by some of the themes that can eventually be found on the cards. It simply just dives into the topic a little further without being too heavy of text.





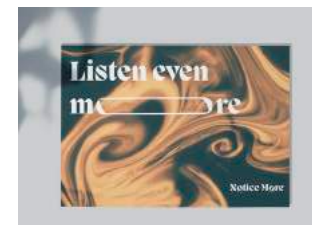
## Postcard

This postcard can be used as a version of “the reminder card” but it can also be a tool to spread the message to friends, family or leave it on coffee tables in bars with your personal message written on the back.



## Kit

All these tools are gathered in a kit that people can order to start this journey of trying to simply notice more in life. The kit is a small box with the cards, stickers, postcards, the reminder card and a small booklet. It keeps all the tools together and enhances the experience of the start of this journey. Also, it creates momentum for the person to start, which is something that helps while starting to rethink your routines



The reminder card



The booklet



Stickers



Cards



## Merchandise

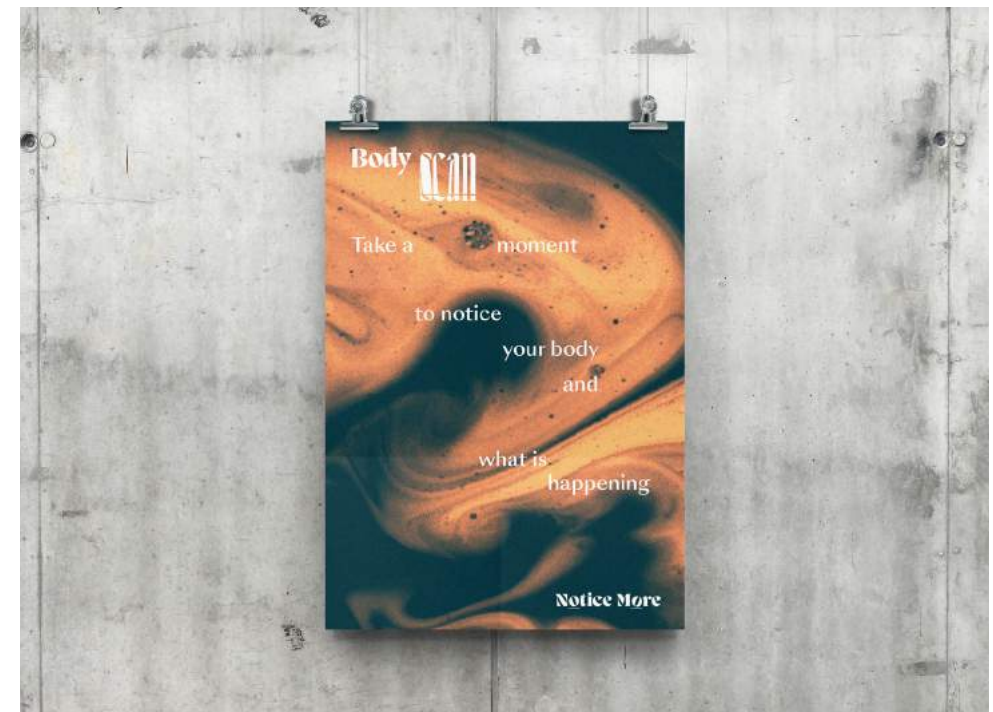
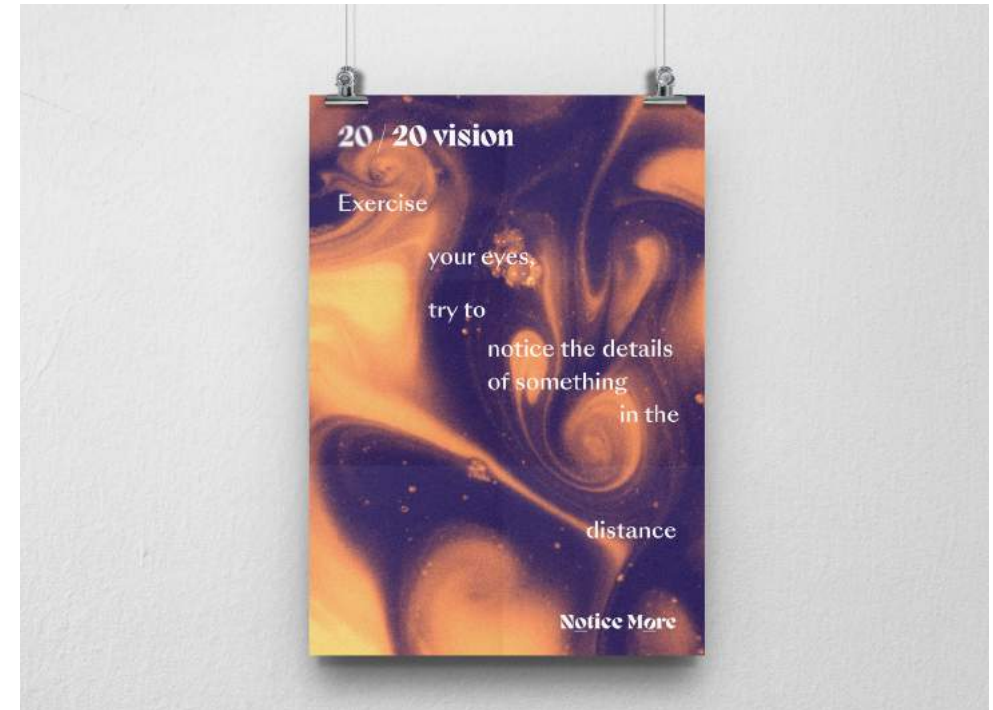
To make the concept more playful we have decided that people can also order merchandise with their favourite colours or photos on top, with the tag line notice more. Think of socks, scarfs, shirts, bags, simply to encourage you more to ones in a while notice that tag on the product that you are walking around with. It can help themselves and others to have a little reminder on the go besides “the reminding card”.



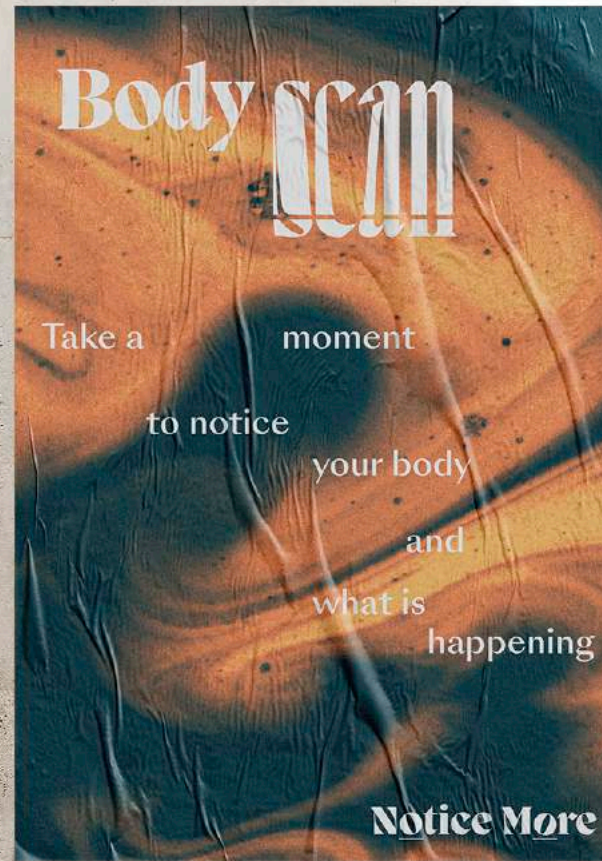
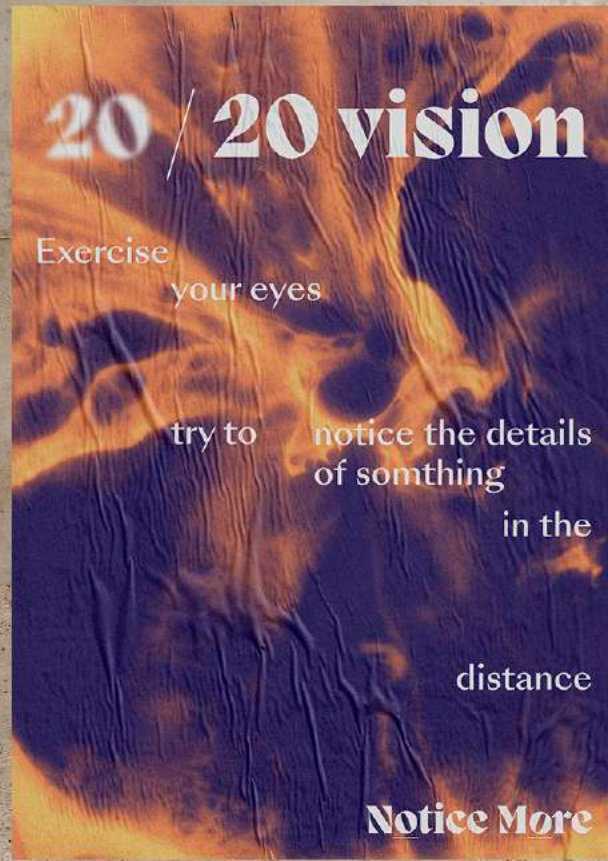
## Posters

Notice more is a concept a tool that will most likely be used at home or stay rather private. However, it is still important to first of all, promote the brand in public, but more importantly, also encourage people to notice more through posters in public spaces. We considered it important that these posters are located in places where you are commuting or waiting but do actually have time to try to notice new things. For this reason we choose the following public places to spread our notice more posters:

- Metro/train/bus station;
- (Near) Supermarkets;
- Shopping street;
- City Parks;
- Biking/Pedestrian Lanes.



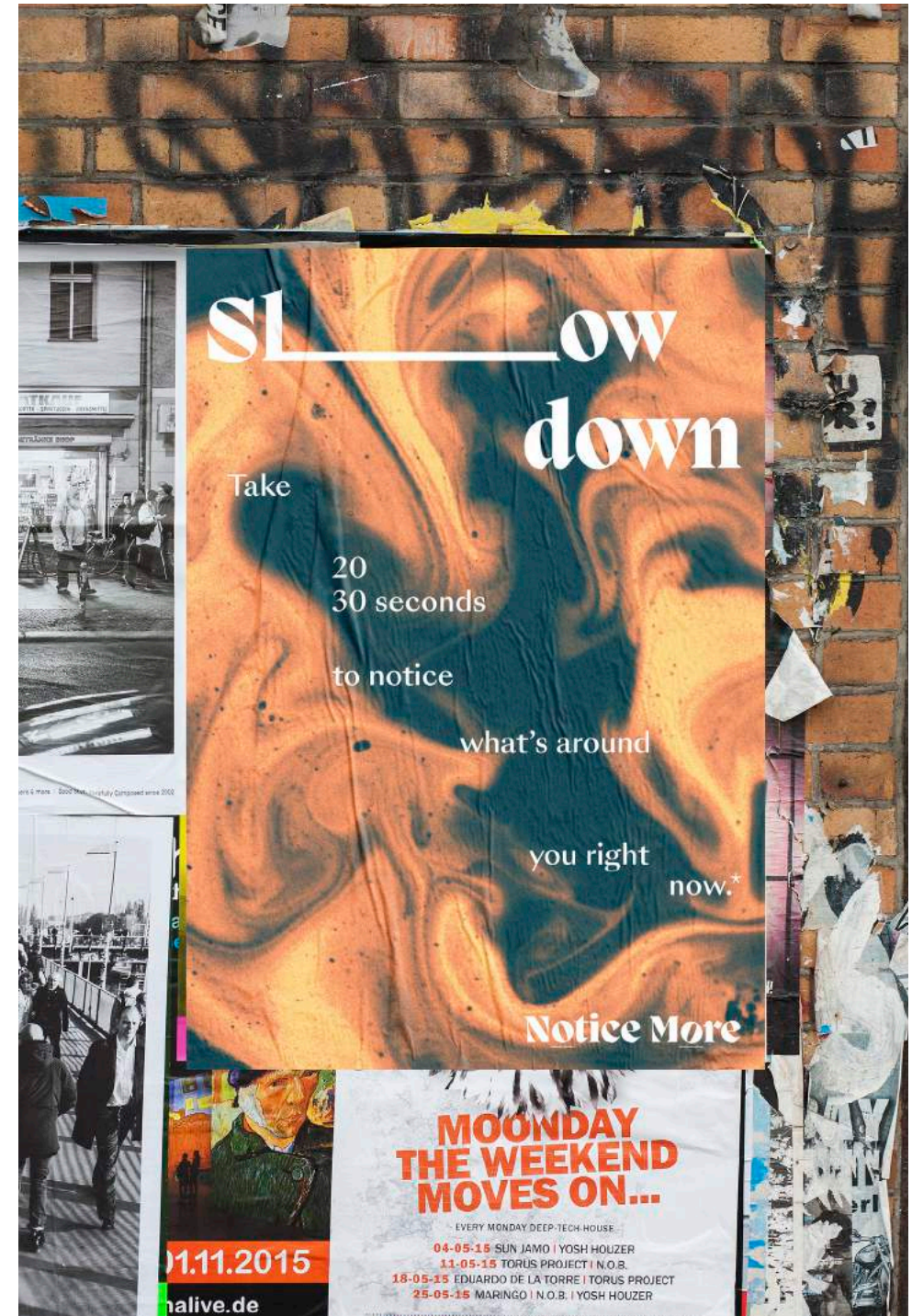
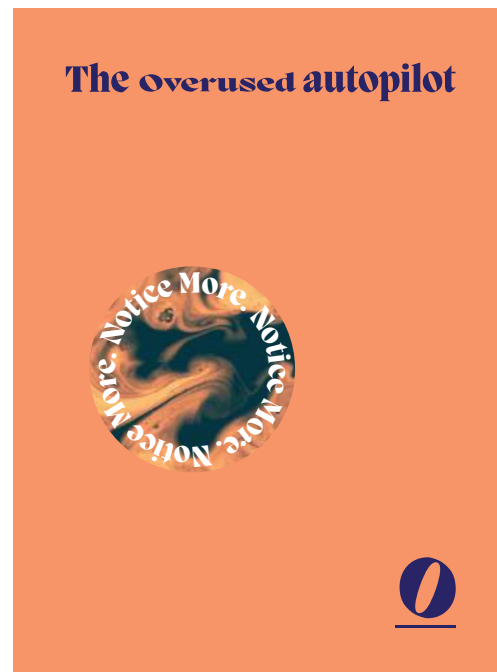








Also a flat colour poster will be spread to create some calmness when pared with all the patterns and playful layout versions.





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\*more research was conducted, but within this booklet only the in-text references were used and spotify podcast were solely mentioned within the text.

Notice More. Notice More. Notice More.

