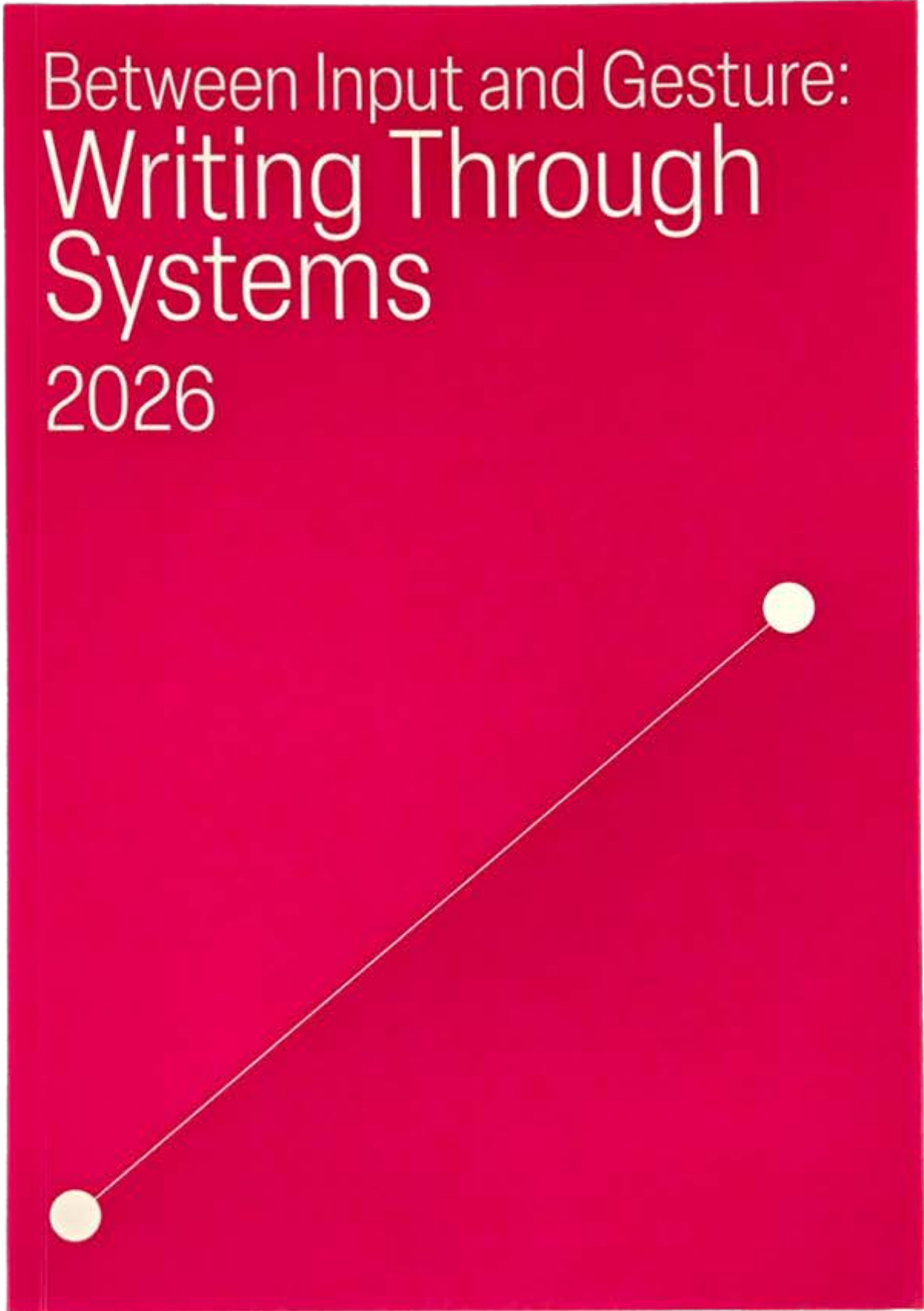


Between Input and Gesture: Writing Through Systems 2026



My Unit 3 project focuses on the relationship between writing tools, gestures and personality expression. Projection1 mainly observes how different writing tools shape gestures; Projection2 further focuses on digital writing on this basis, studying how personality is transferred, disassembled and reappears in the system output when the ability to express gestures weakens.

Stage1: Projection 1

§ Negotiated Gestures

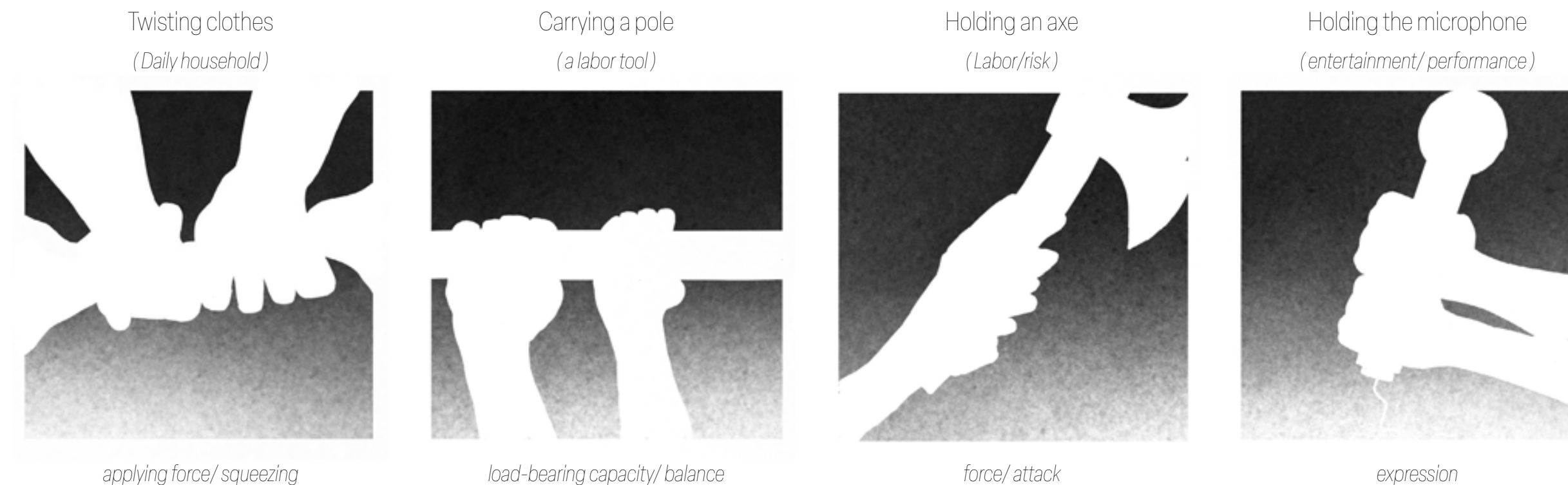
§ How Hand Movements Shift Meaning Across Tools and Time

3 iteration ways

Iteration 1: The same gesture × different scene functions

Projection1 began with a broad investigation into writing tools and hand gestures. I explored how different tools shaped the way the hand moves, touches, and leaves traces. At this stage, my focus was mainly on the visible transformation of gesture.

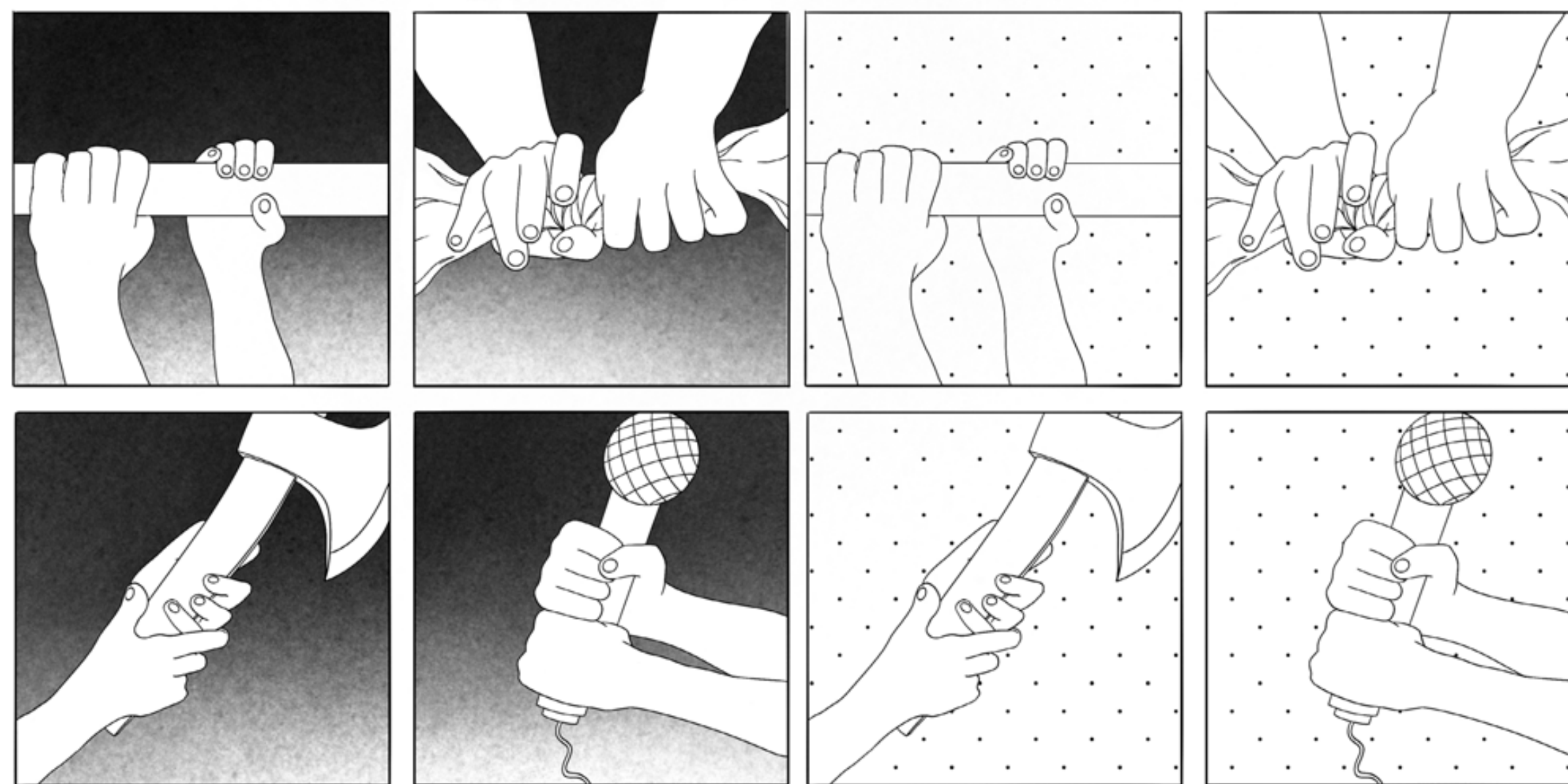
Using illustration and publication as a way to archive and compare gestures actions rather than explain them.



TWO HANDS GRIPPING VERTICALLY

I selected the highly stable gesture of two hands gripping vertically, focusing on how the same bodily posture performs different functions across social contexts and historical moments.

This iteration reveals contextual functionality but remains limited to social use, offering less insight into structural shifts driven by tools and technologies.



3 iteration ways

Iteration 1: The same gesture × different scene functions

Iteration 2: The same gesture × tool evolution

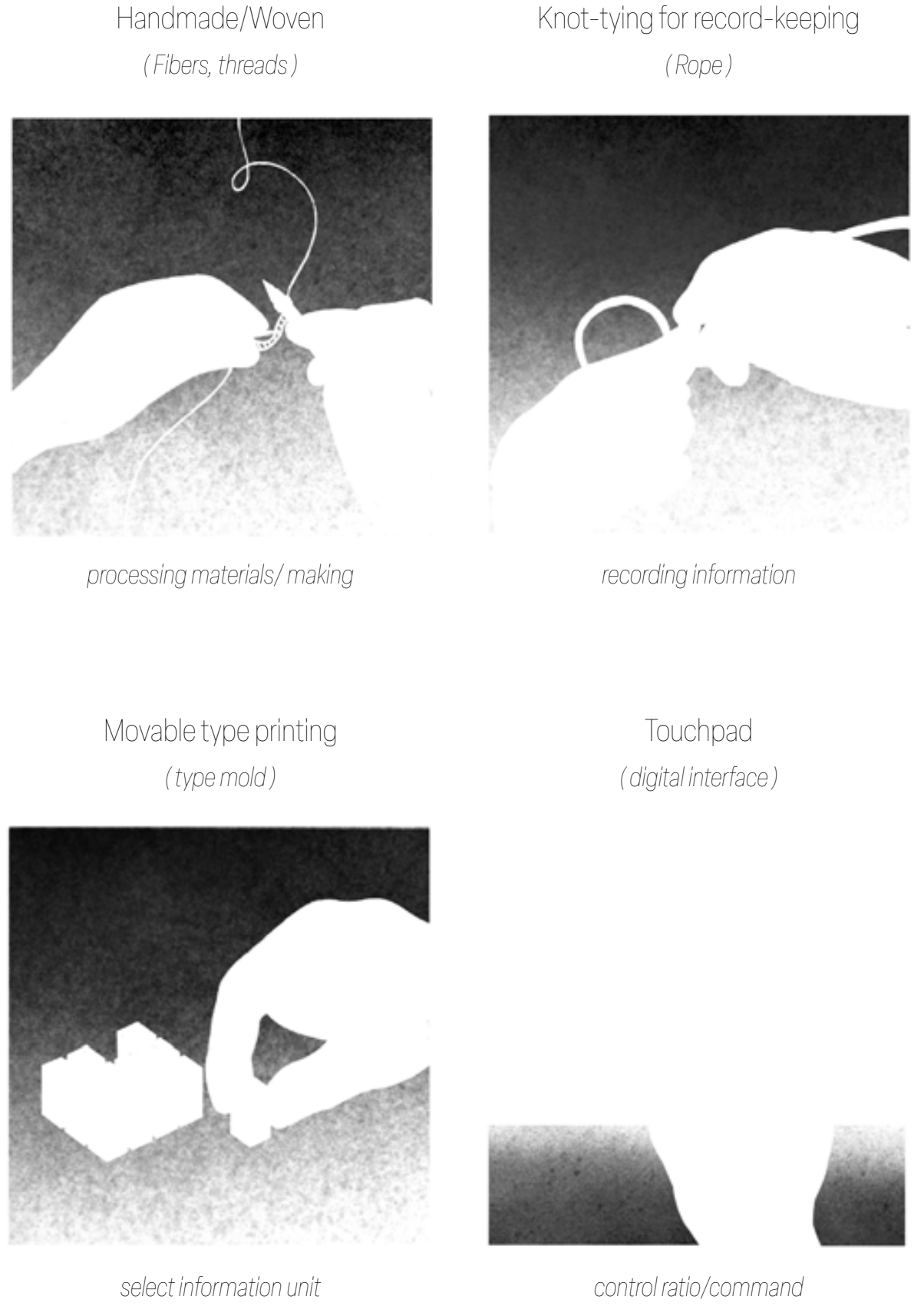
Iteration 3: Gesture × Tool × Information generation process (Comic strip)

Stage1: Projection 1

§ Negotiated Gestures
§ How Hand Movements Shift Meaning Across Tools and Time

3 iteration ways

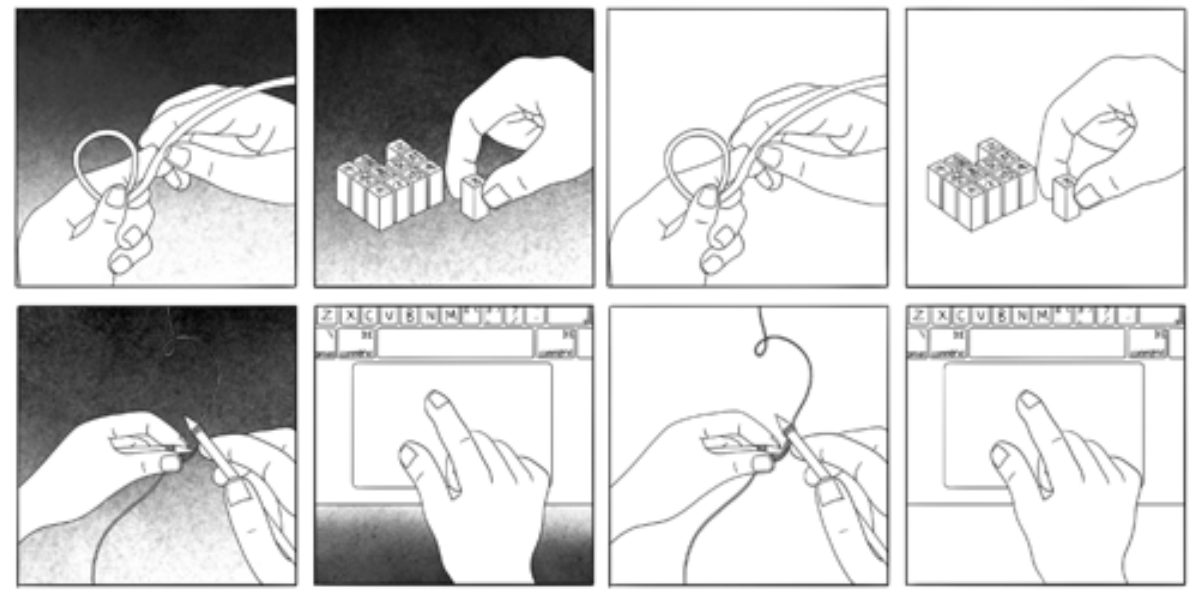
Iteration 2: The same gesture × tool evolution



PINCH THE THUMB AND INDEX FINGER TOGETHER

The gesture transforms from directly acting upon material to issuing commands within a system. As tools become less visible, gestures do not disappear but are re-encoded as interface actions.

This iteration critically reveals that so-called “natural” gestures are often the result of prolonged technological conditioning.



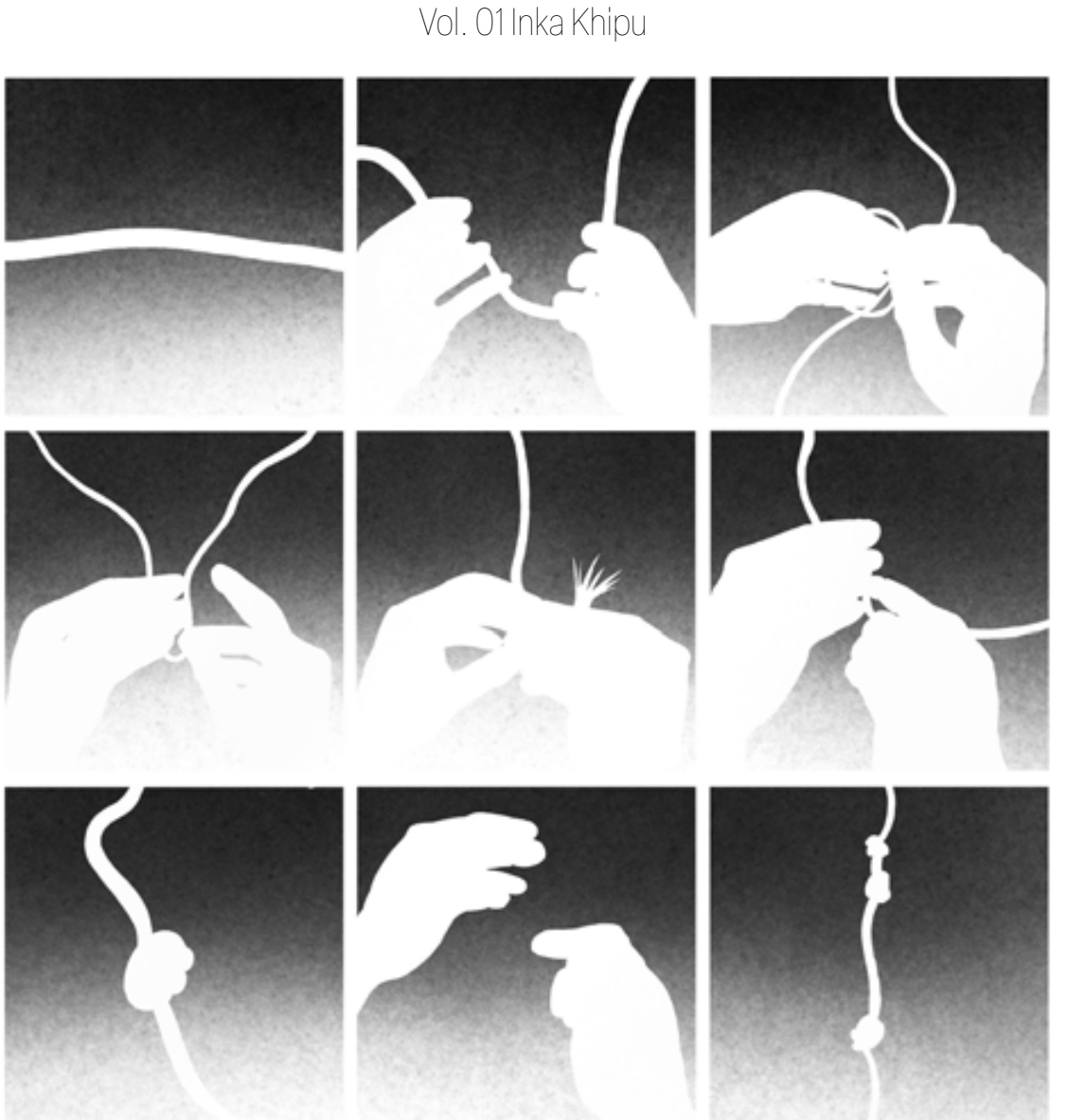
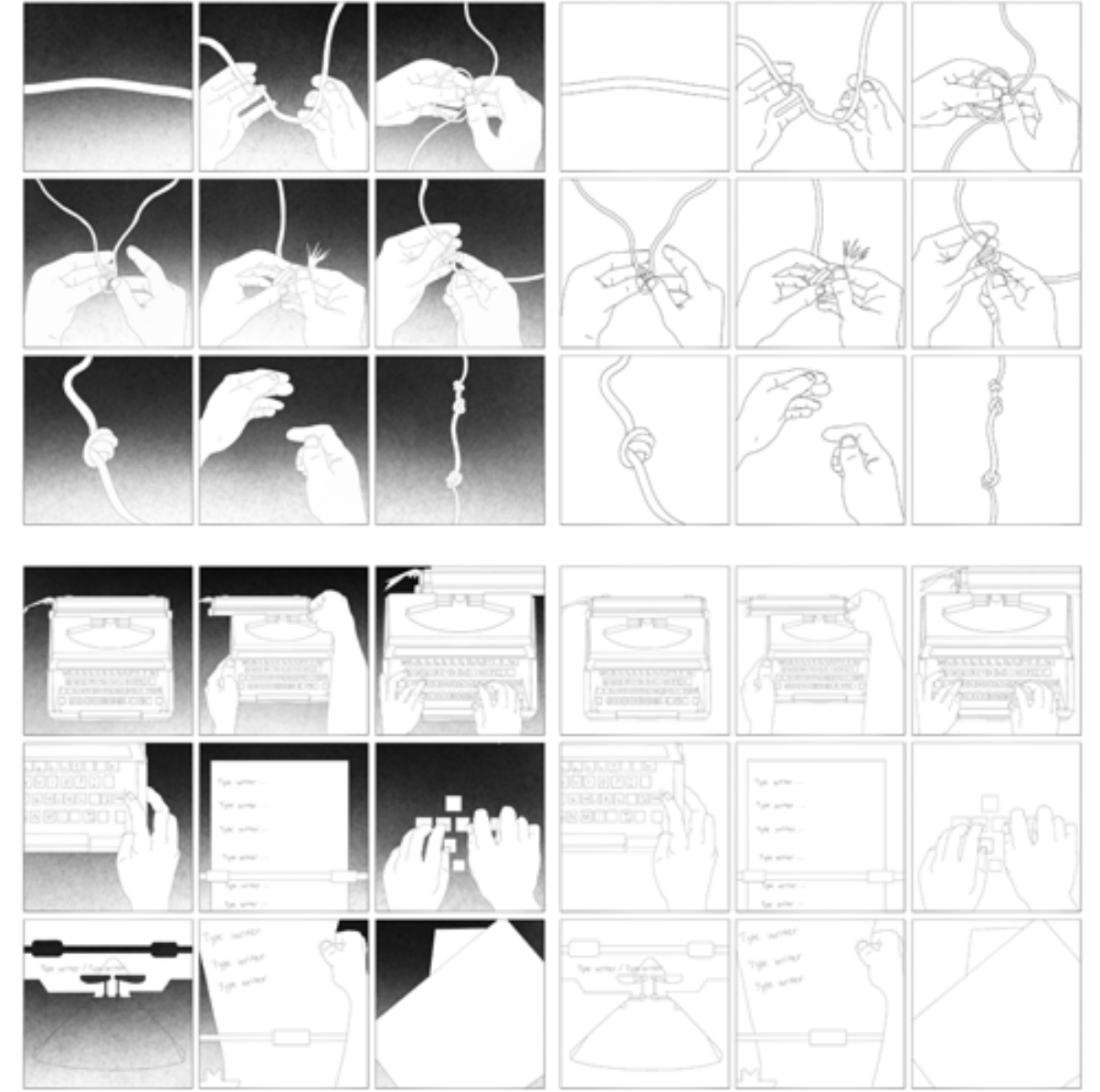
3 iteration ways

Iteration 3: Gesture × Tool × Information generation process (Comic strip)

Vol. 01 Inka Khipu
Vol. 02 Typewriter

Using sequential comics, I focus on how gestures progressively act upon tools to enable the emergence of information.

Gestures shift from continuous bodily movements to discrete, rhythmic, and standardised inputs.



Stage1: Projection 1

§ Negotiated Gestures § How Hand Movements Shift Meaning Across Tools and Time

Across three levels — social function, tool operation, and information systems — these iterations reveal the instability of gesture.

They collectively point to a core conclusion: gesture meaning is not universal, but continuously negotiated through tools and use.

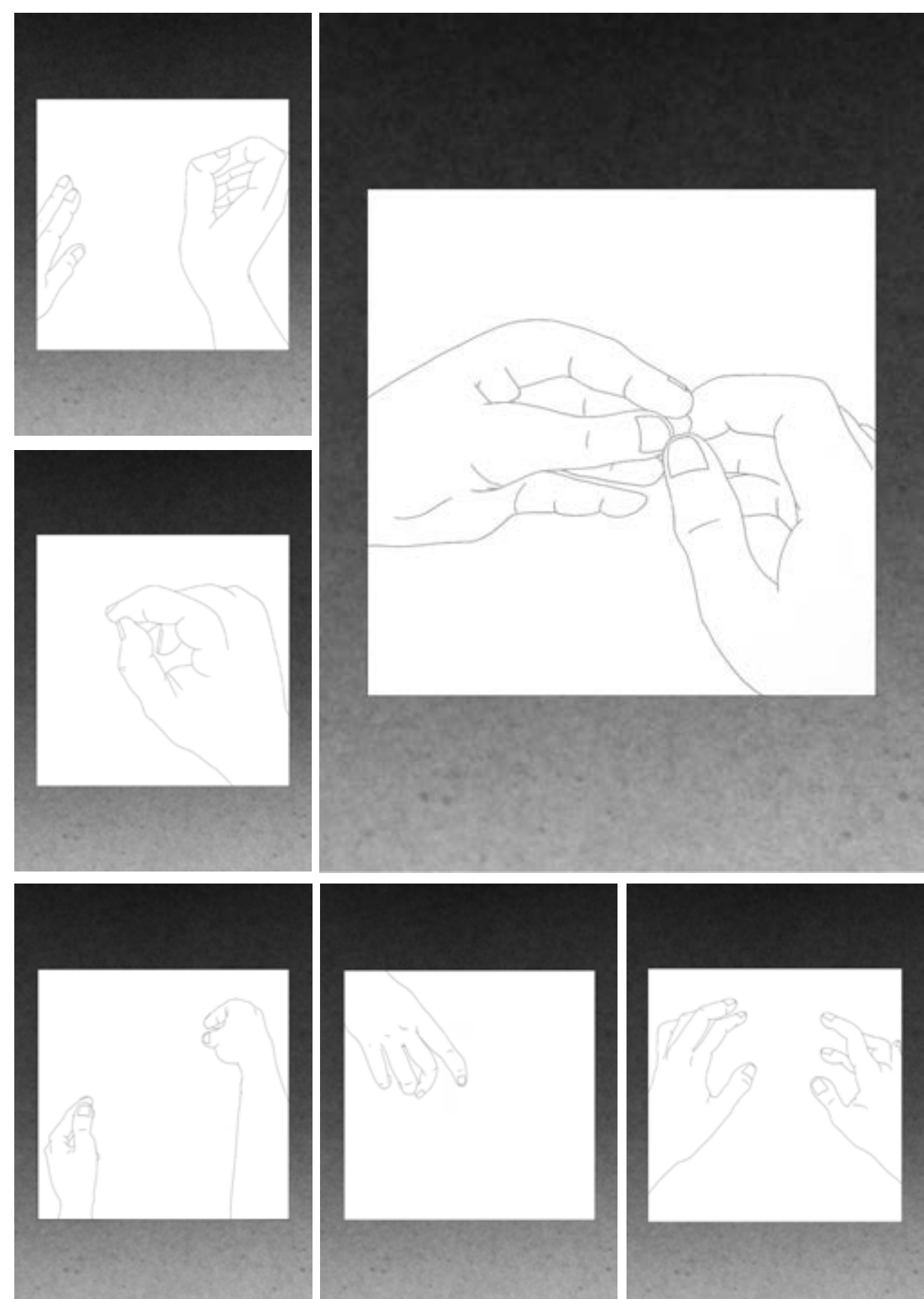
In step2 I made all examples are framed as different writing systems: knot-based writing, inscription, handwriting, mechanical transcription, and digital input.

Part 1 removes tools and only shows gestures;
Part 2 uses comic-like sequences to show gestures together with writing tools across time.

Part 1

GUESS THE TOOL abstraction and recognition

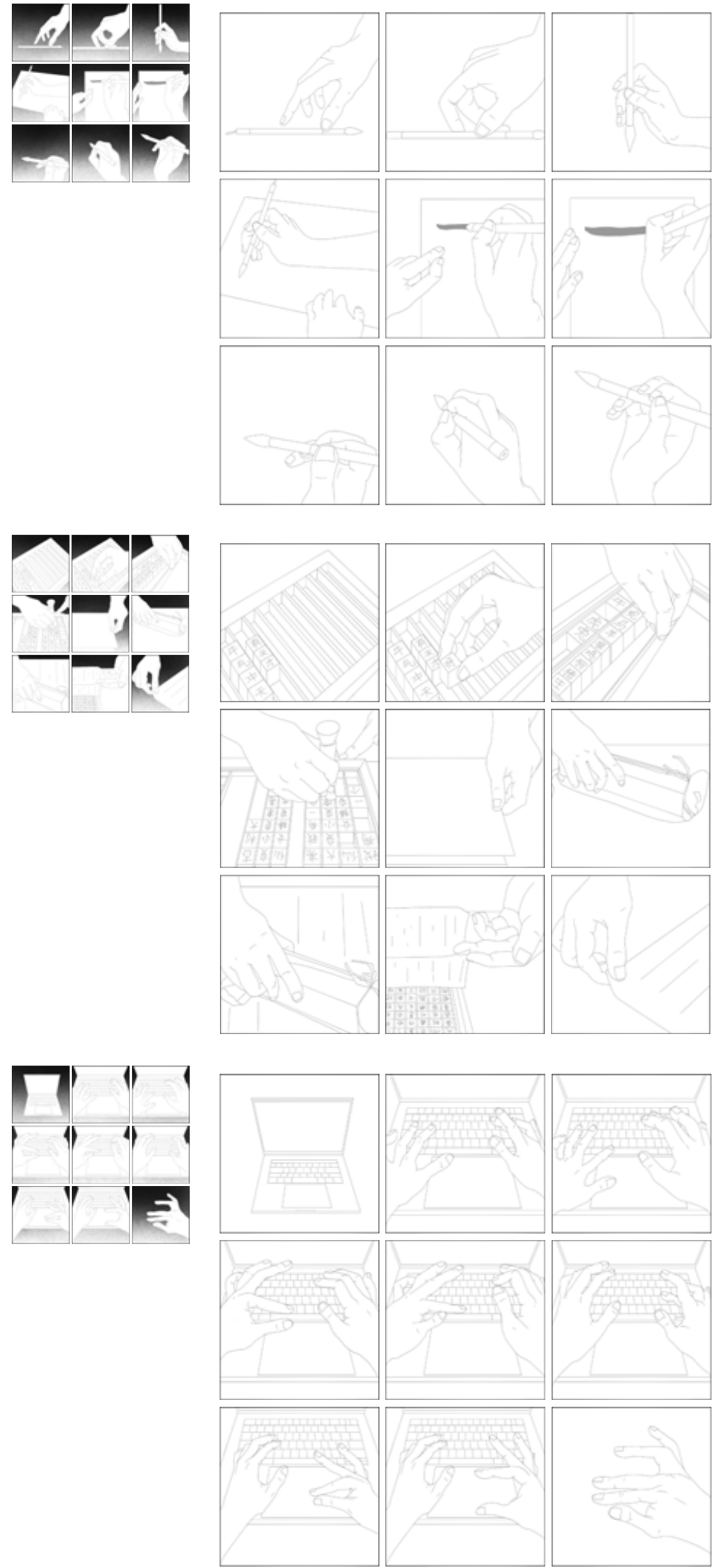
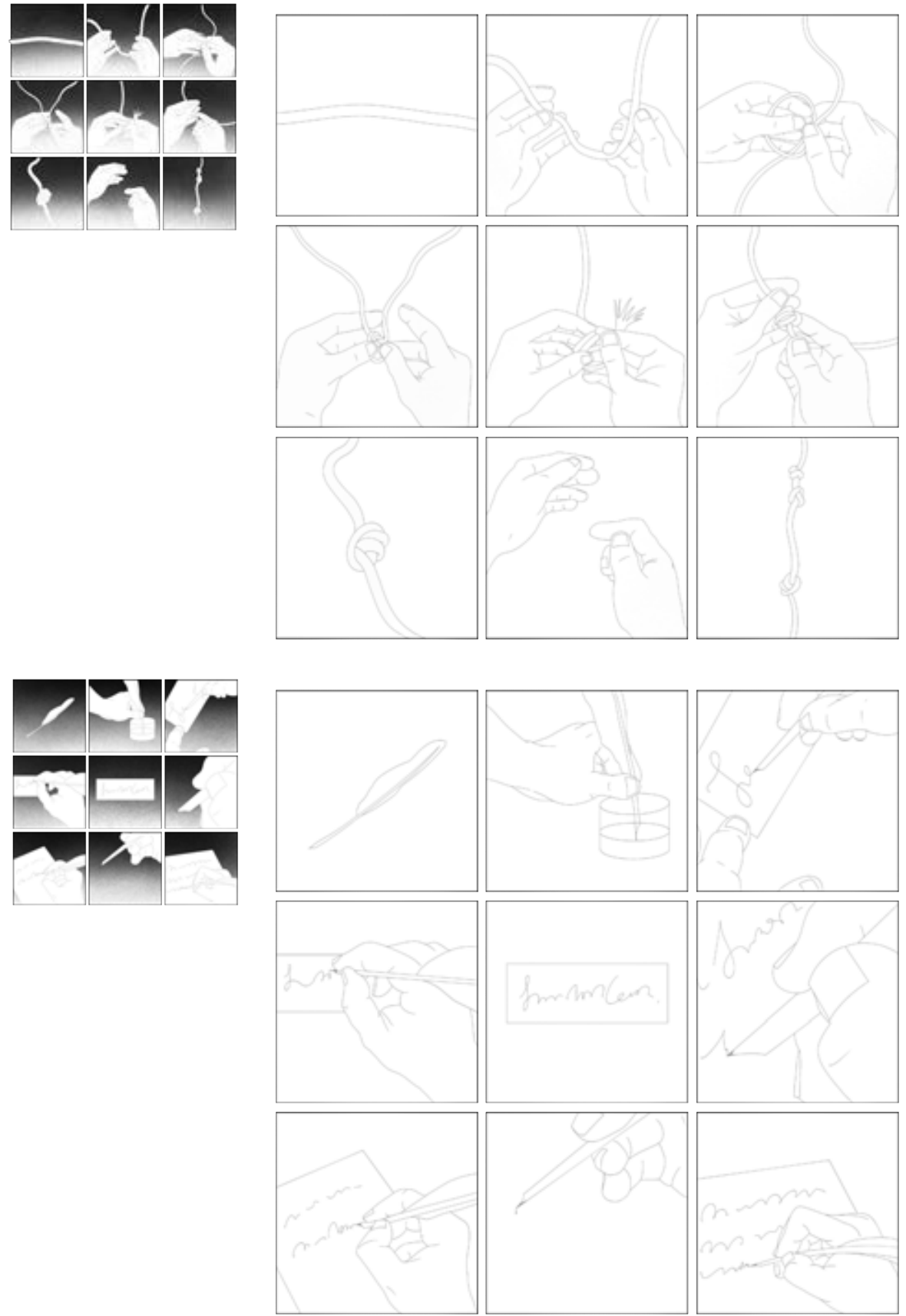
I'm testing whether gestures alone—without tools—can still indicate the degree of abstraction, the technological stage, and the type of writing system behind them.



Part 2

MATCHING TEST sequencing and historical legibility

Part 2 tests whether my visual sequencing of gestures and tools communicates a readable transformation of writing systems without textual explanation.



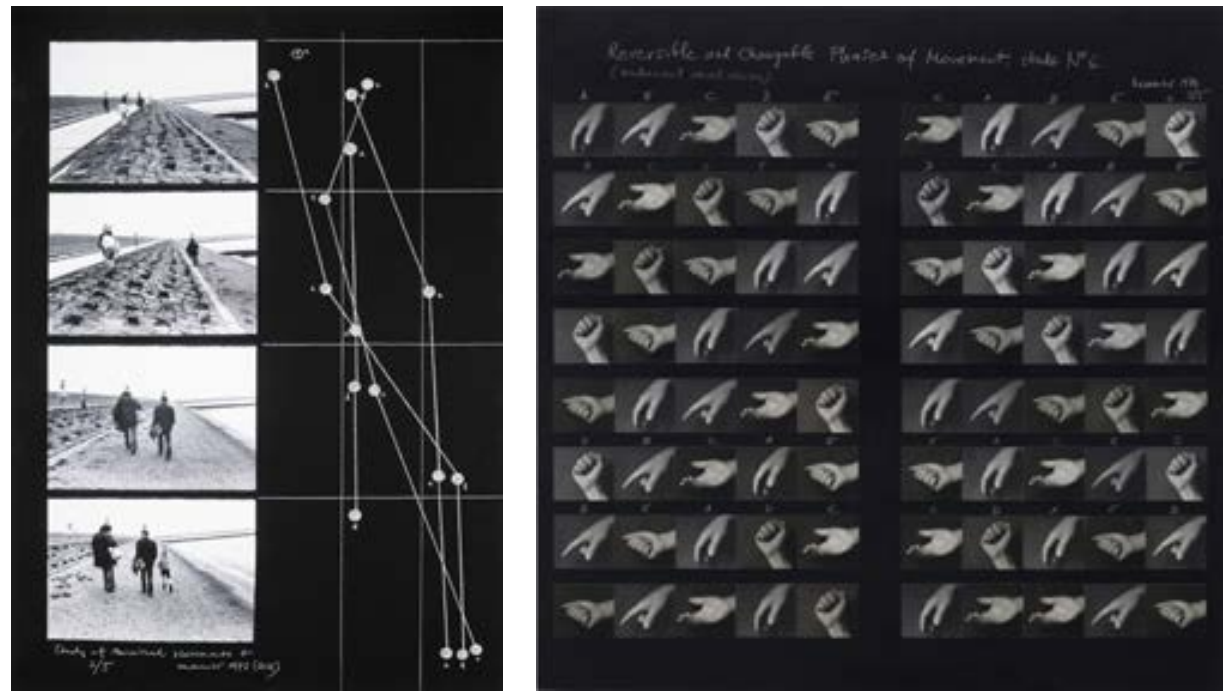
Stage1: Projection 1

§ Negotiated Gestures
§ How Hand Movements Shift Meaning Across Tools and Time

Enquiry: This project investigates how writing technologies shape, standardise, and abstract hand gestures across historical development, and examines how the structural design of writing tools continually reshapes bodily writing behaviours.

Part 1

Reference



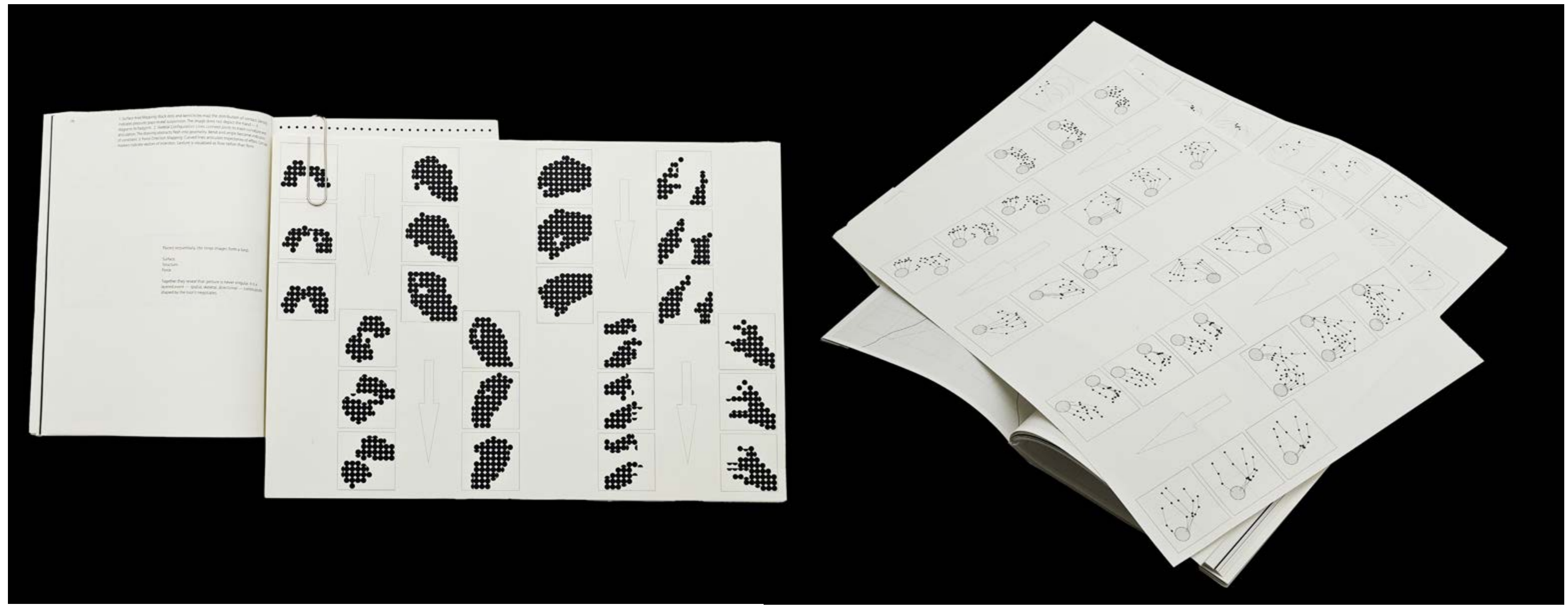
Dora Maurer's works break down hand movements into subtle changes and present them through systematic grid structures, creating a dynamic logical sequence. Rather than focusing on expressive gestures, her work highlights how movements change within repetition, constraints, and abstract systems, allowing viewers to read differences across time. This relates closely to the precise and analytical approach in my project. Similarly, I explore how writing tools such as brushes, pens, keyboards, and touchscreens produce small but structural changes in finger contact, pressure distribution, and spatial movement, revealing different gesture trajectories across writing technologies.

Maurer, D. (n.d.) Dóra Maurer. Tate. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/dora-maurer-2351> (Accessed: 18 February 2026).

Part 2

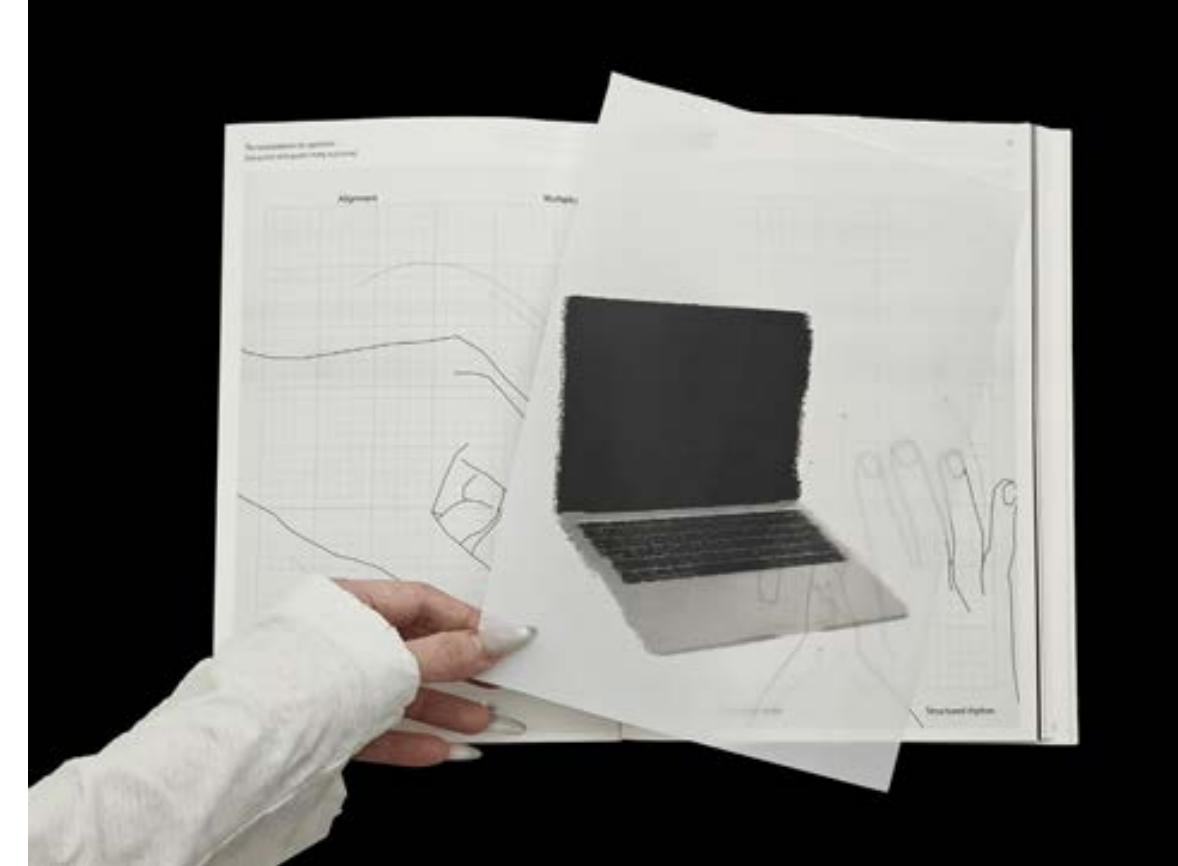
Publication Structure

- Guessing Game
- Gesture Analysis Framework
- Generative
- Mechanical
- Abstracted
- Comparative Charts
- Conclusion
- Future Speculation



Stage1: Projection 1

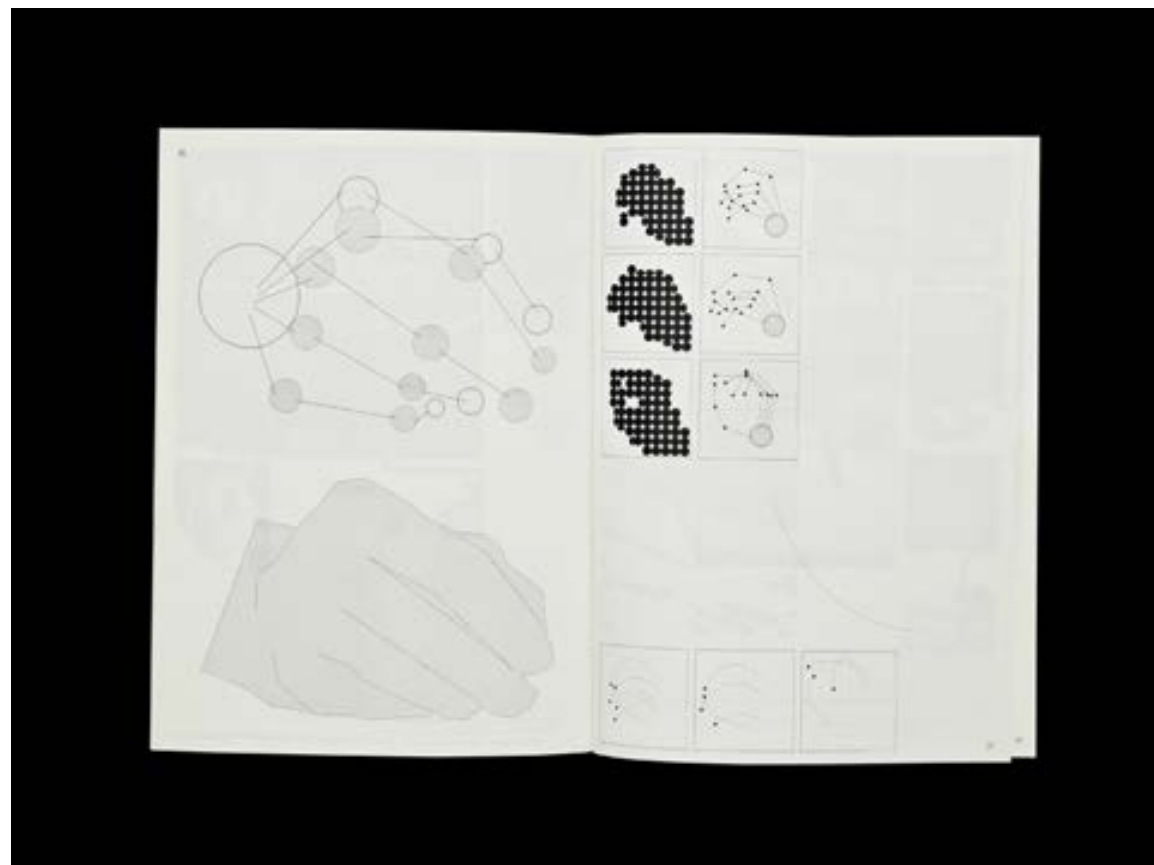
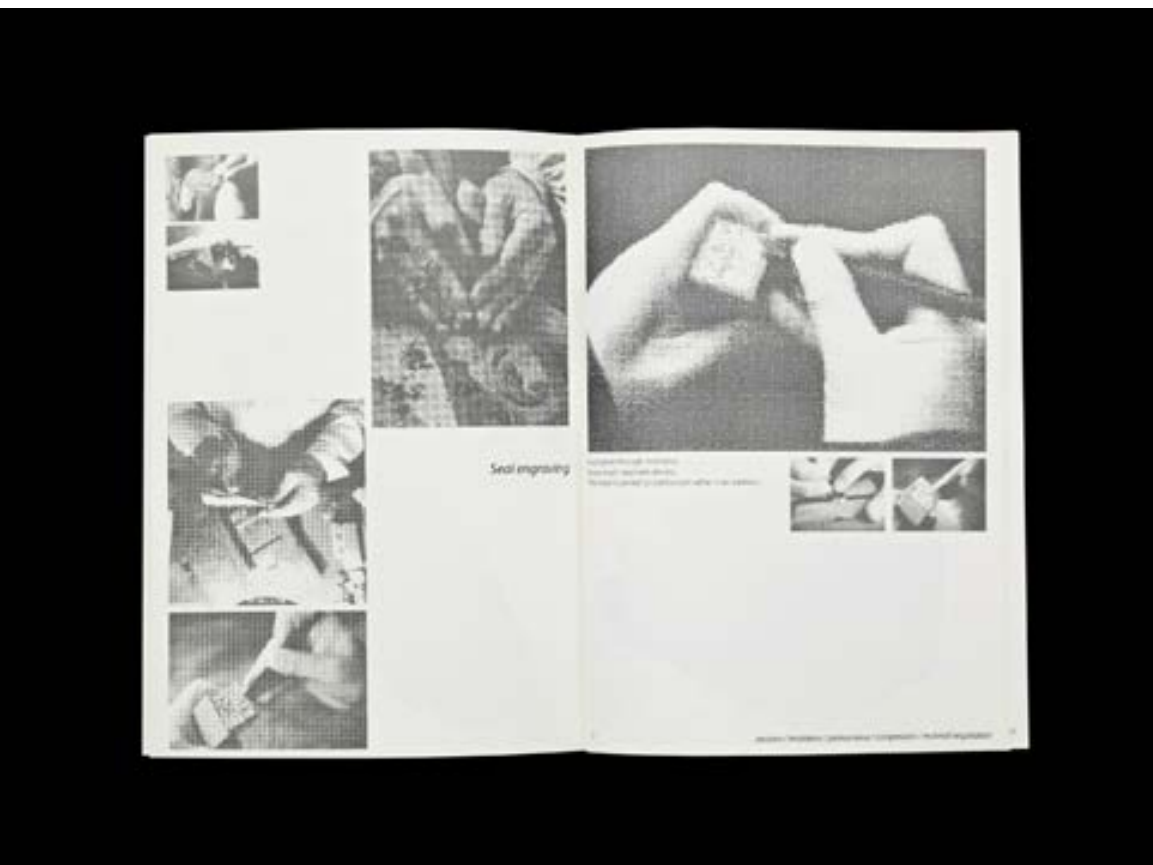
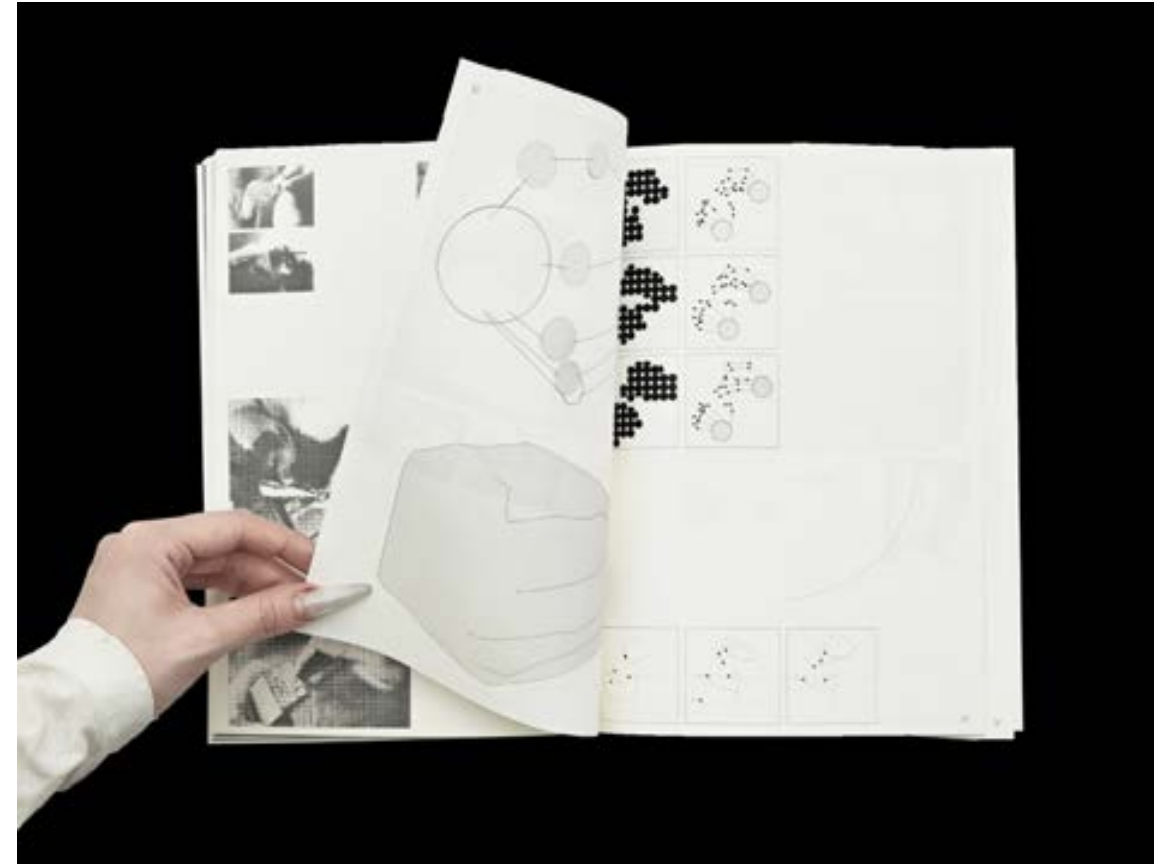
§ Negotiated Gestures
§ How Hand Movements Shift Meaning Across Tools and Time



1



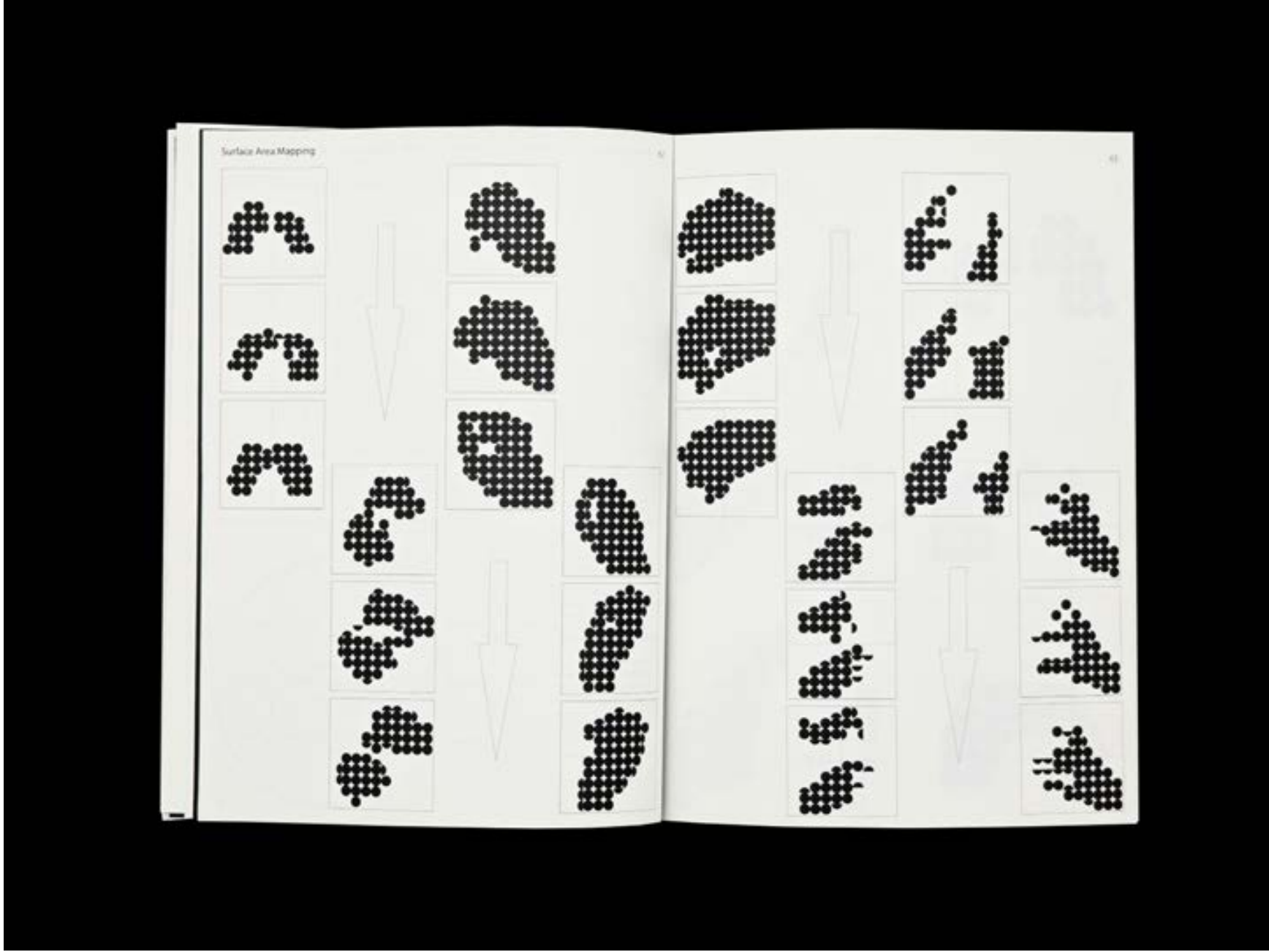
2



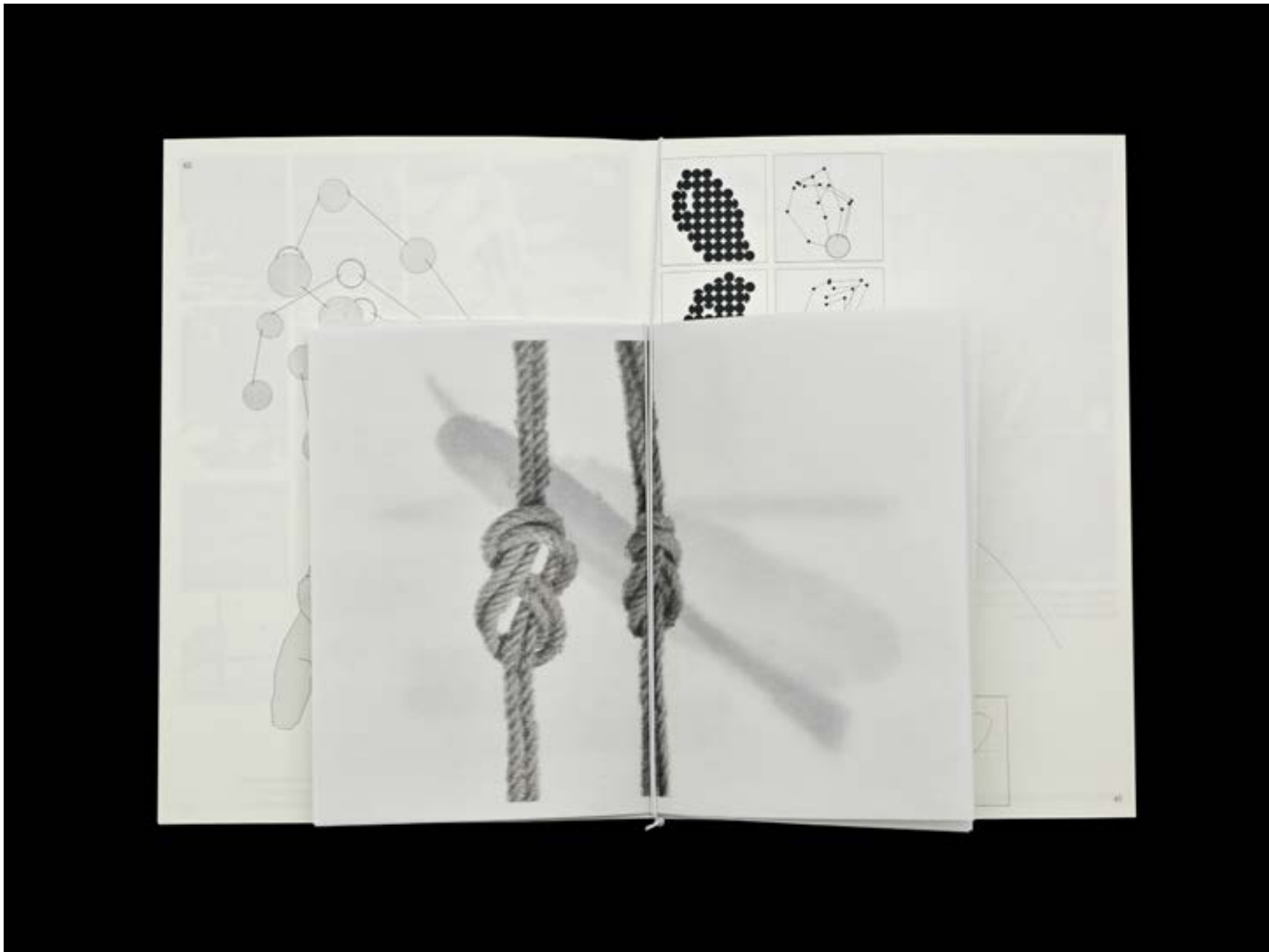
- 1: Guessing Game
- 2: Gesture Analysis Framework
 - Generative
 - Mechanical
 - Abstracted

Stage1: Projection 1

§ Negotiated Gestures
§ How Hand Movements Shift Meaning Across Tools and Time



3



Finding

However, Projection1 was still too broad. It showed that gestures changed, but it did not fully explain what this change meant. Through tutor feedback, theoretical reading, and my own visual experiments, I realised that the more important question was not only how gestures changed, but what happens to individuality when gestures become less expressive.

3: Comparative Charts
4: Conclusion
5: Future Speculation

Stage2: Projection 1 → Projection 2

Together, these theories shifted my project from studying the visual form of gestures to investigating how gestures are reorganised, mediated, and reconstructed through digital systems.

§ From Gesture Change to Individuality Shift

Projection2 redirects the enquiry from a historical comparison of writing tools to a focused investigation of digital writing.

I chose to concentrate on **handwriting** and **keyboard input** because this comparison clearly shows the shift from gesture-based expression to system-mediated expression.

Part 1

THEORETICAL SHIFT

Tim Ingold

Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture (2013)

“Writing is a gesture that aligns and arranges ideas.”
— Vilém Flusser

Tim Ingold’s idea of “thinking through doing” helped me understand the hand not simply as a tool, but as a site where thinking and expression emerge through movement and material interaction. **This shifted my focus towards handwriting as an embodied process, where individuality is directly visible through gesture, rhythm, pressure, and trace.**

Part 1

THEORETICAL SHIFT

Vilém Flusser

Does Writing Have a Future? (2011)

“Writing is a gesture that aligns and arranges ideas.”
— Vilém Flusser

Vilém Flusser describes writing as a gesture that organises thought into structured systems. **His writing helped me realise that gesture is not only expressive, but also systematic and rule-based.** This became especially important when examining digital writing, where typing transforms gesture into repetitive inputs and predefined commands.

Part 1

THEORETICAL SHIFT

Marshall McLuhan

The Medium is the Massage (1967)

“Writing is a gesture that aligns and arranges ideas.”
— Vilém Flusser

Marshall McLuhan’s media theory expanded my project beyond gesture itself and towards the role of media and systems. His idea that media reshape human behaviour **helped me reconsider keyboards and digital interfaces not as neutral tools, but as structures that actively transform expression and individuality.**

2 Parts

1: Theoretical Shift

2: Experimental Shift

Stage2: Projection 1 → Projection 2

§ From Gesture Change to Individuality Shift

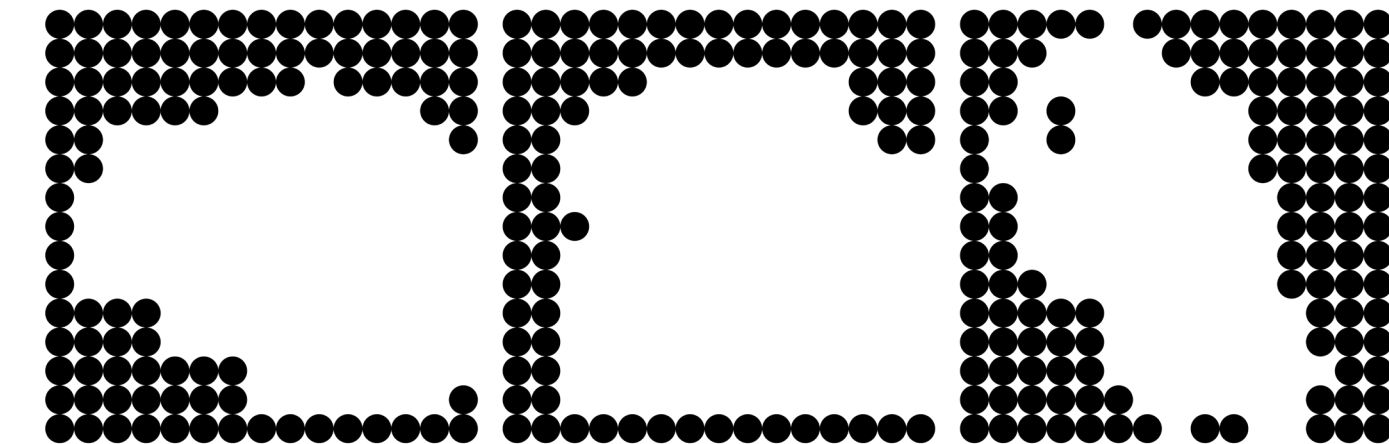
01 Gesture Form

Gesture form represents the most direct visual expression of the hand. It shows how movement itself carries individuality.

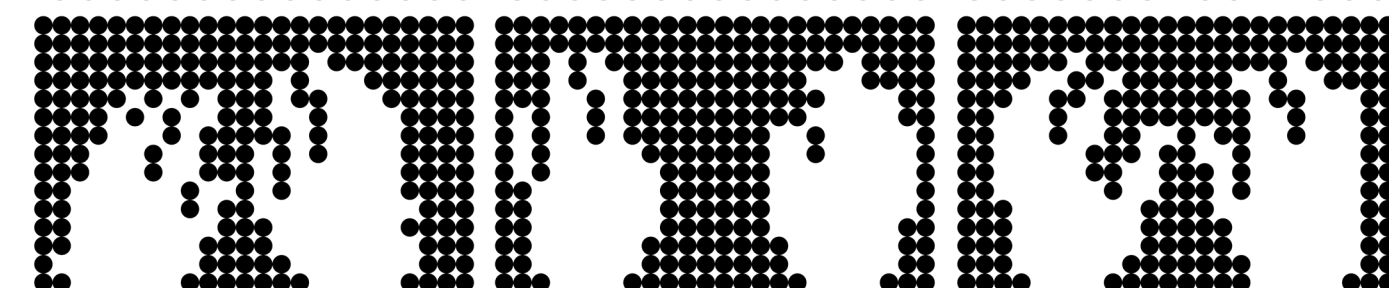
Finding:

- Handwriting gestures vary significantly between individuals
- Typing gestures become repetitive and standardised
- Differences between individuals become less visible

Hand Writing



Digital Writing



Part 2

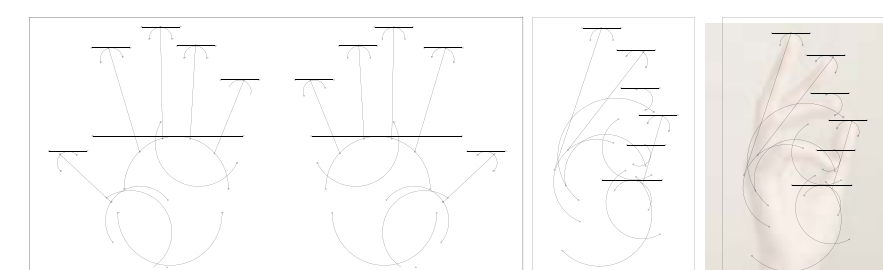
EXPERIMENTAL SHIFT

02 Contact Between Hand and Tool

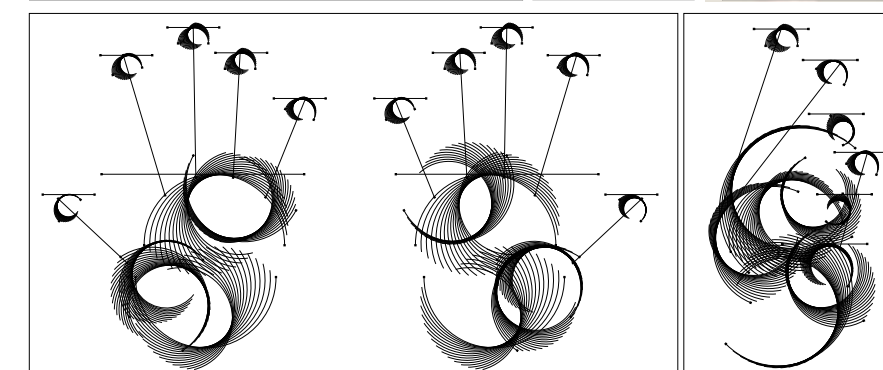
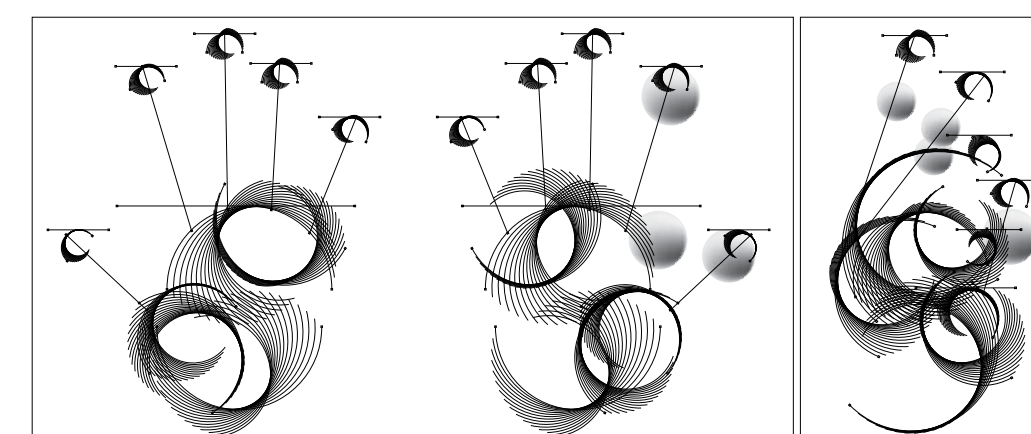
The contact area reflects how the hand engages with the tool, revealing the degree of control and variation in interaction.

Finding:

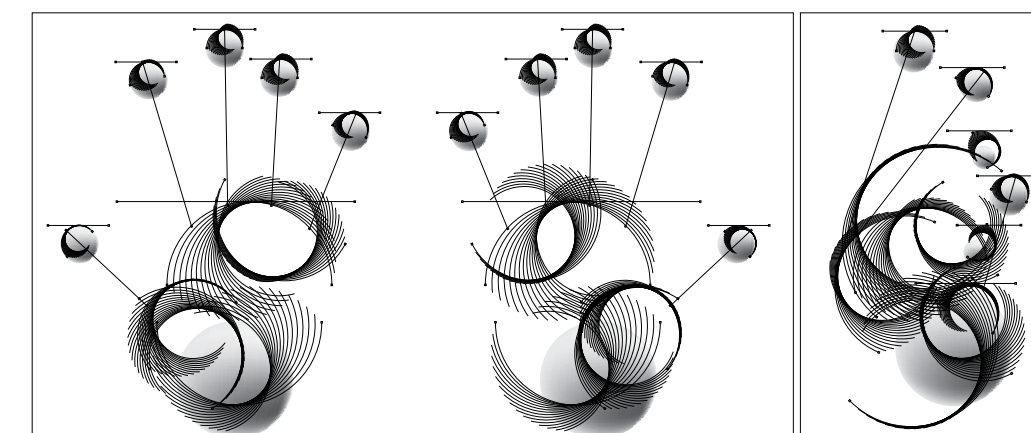
- In handwriting, contact is flexible and varied
- In typing, contact is minimal and fixed Interaction becomes more restricted



Hand Writing



Digital Writing



In the visual experiment, I compared the gesture forms, the contact relationship between hands and tools, and the traces in handwriting and keyboard input. Experiments have found that personality in handwriting can be directly seen through actions and handwriting. However, gestures in keyboard input tend to be repetitive and standardized. It is no longer possible to clearly understand individual differences merely by observing gestures. This discovery prompted me to further study rhythm, pauses, deletion and modification, and system output.

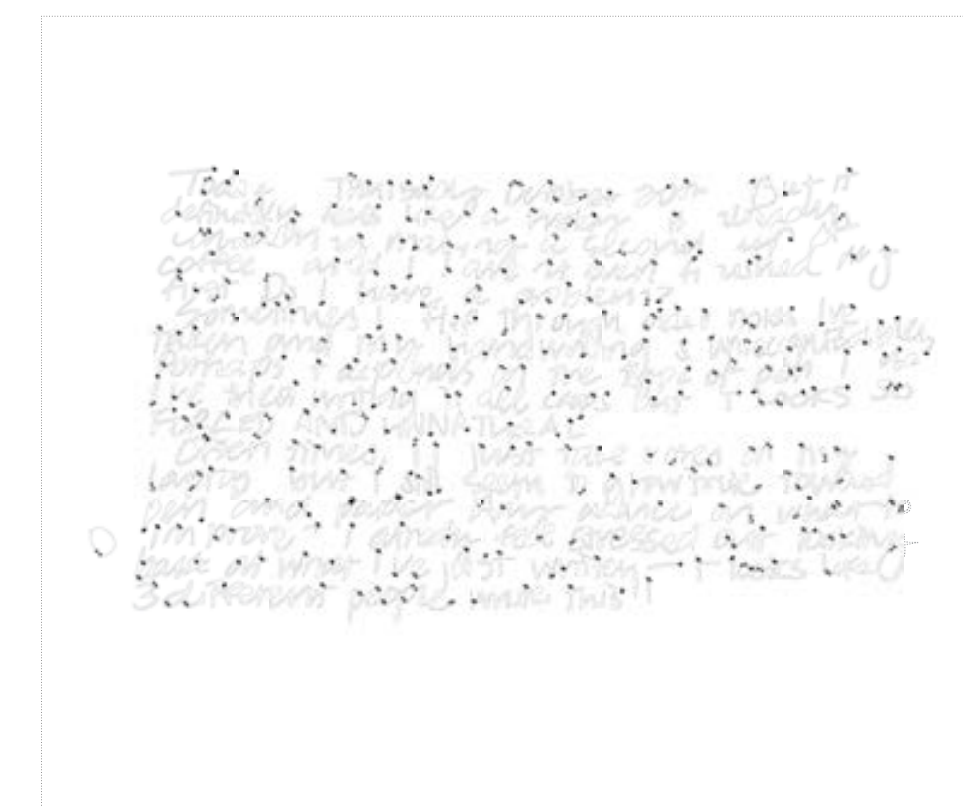
03 Trace Produced by Writing

Through experiments, an attempt is made to observe whether the action leaves readable information.

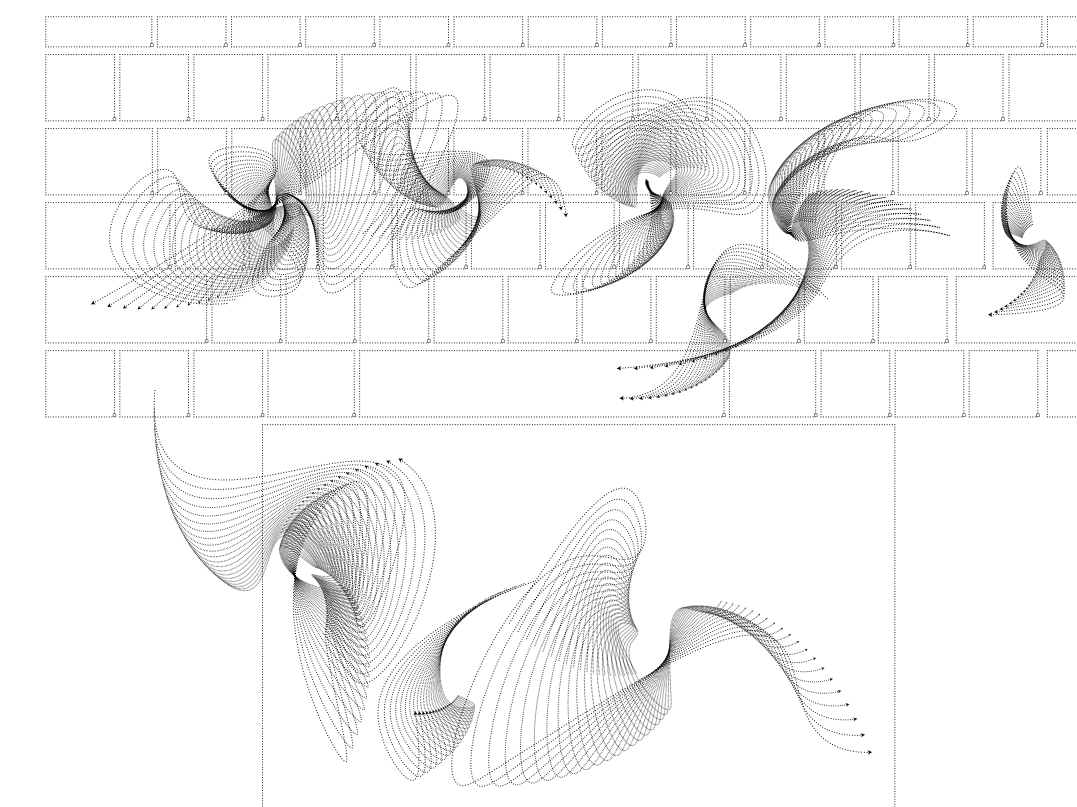
Finding:

- Handwriting leaves unique and distinctive marks that can be clearly seen directly
- The standardization and consistency of keyboard output have led to the disconnection between gestures and traces, blurring individuality

Hand Writing



Digital Writing



Stage3: Projection 2

§ Between Input and Guesture: Writing Through Systems 2026

Structure

Part 1

01 Gesture Form

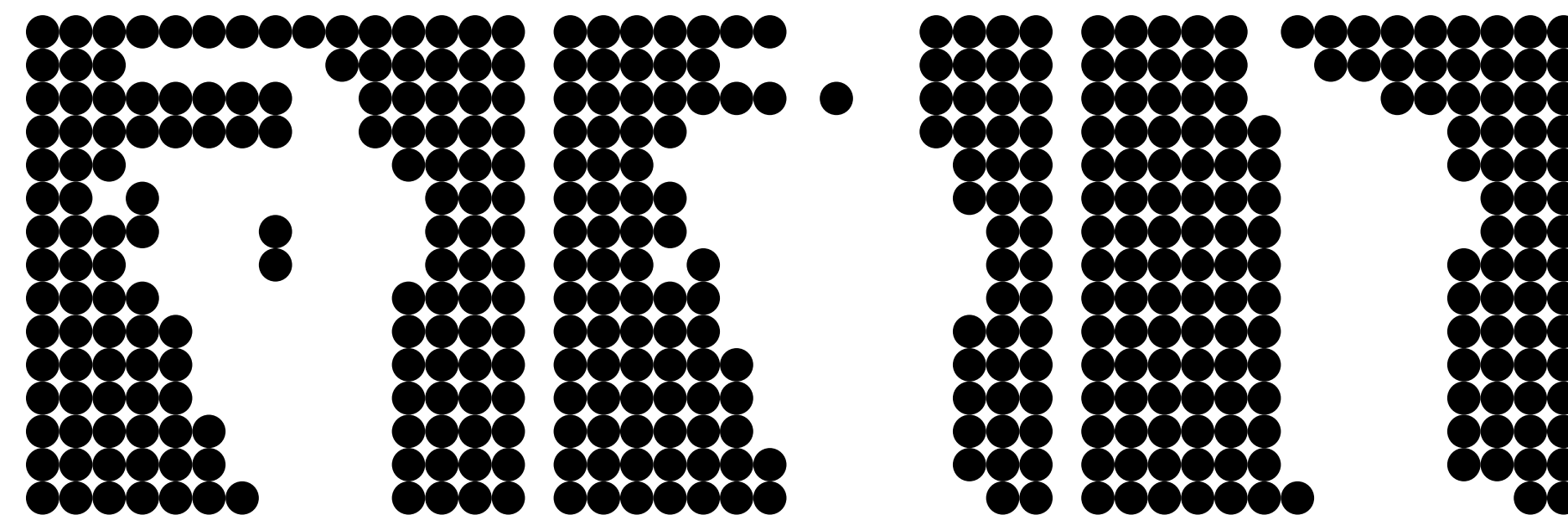
Handwriting vs Digital Writing

Compare handwriting and typing gestures across individuals to examine how movement carries meaning.

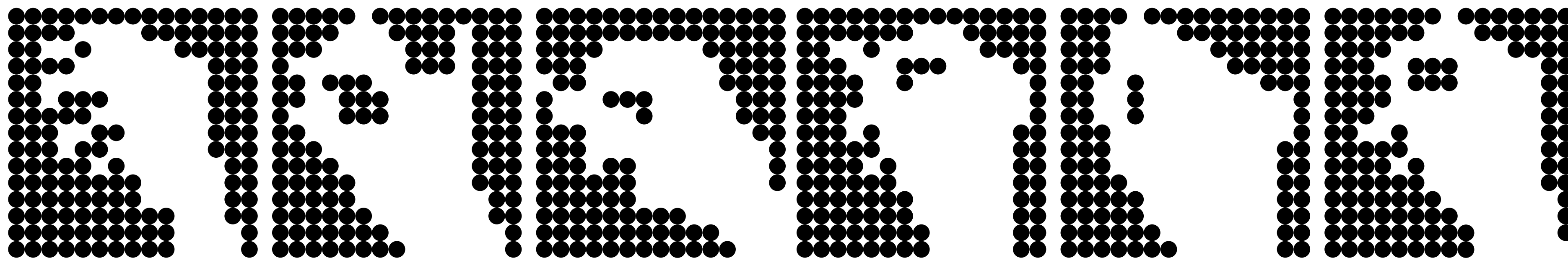
Therefore, after comparing handwriting with keyboard input in the previous section, I decided to invite more participants to take part in this comparison to ensure that my conclusion is correct. The individuality of a person is presented in a more systematic way in electronic input.

Meanwhile, I will continue to analyze how the individuality of human beings in electronic input is analyzed layer by layer.

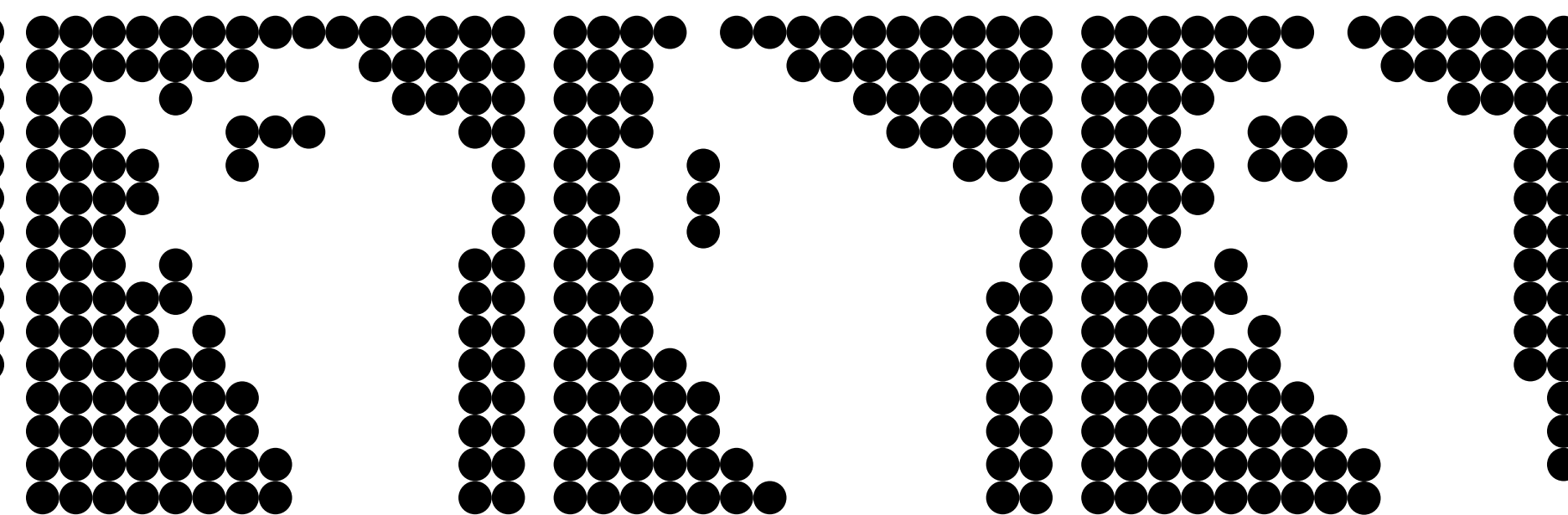
Group 1.1



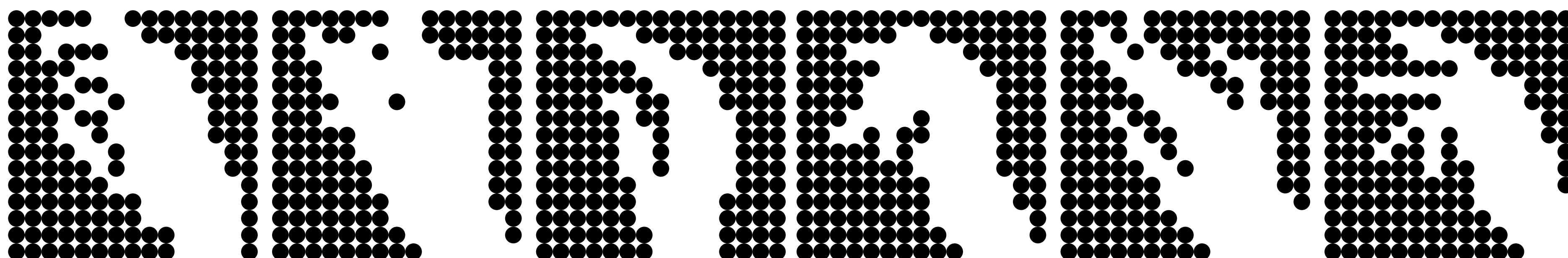
Group 2.1



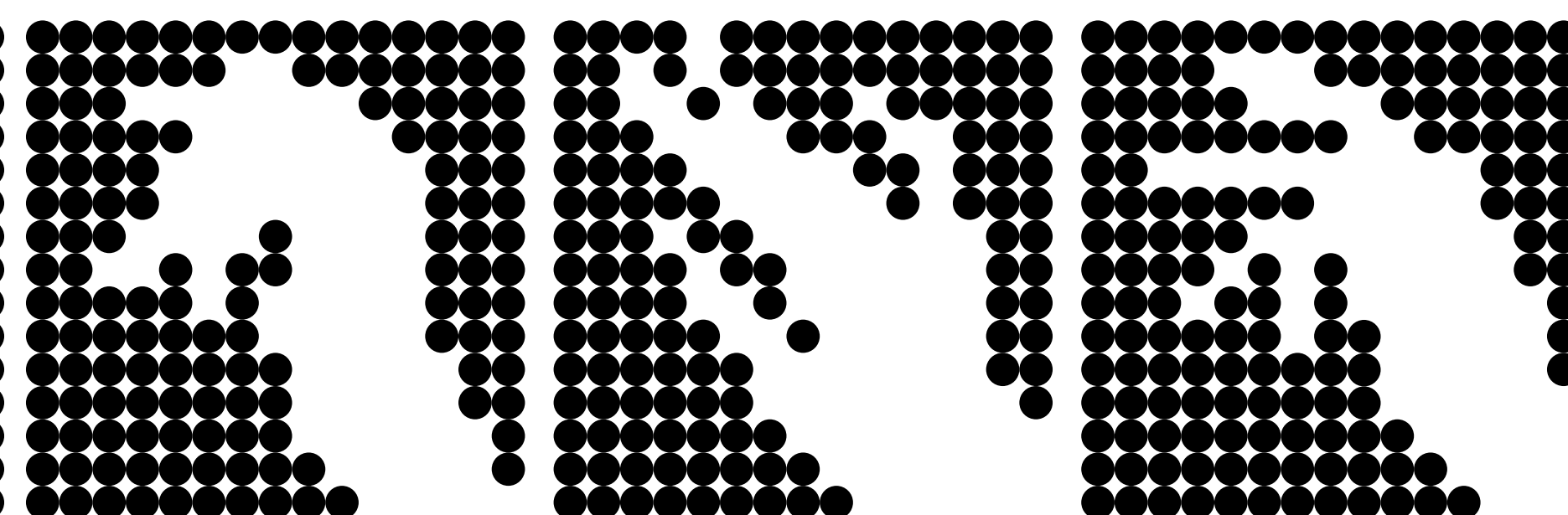
Group 3.1



Group 4.1



Group 5.1



Structure

Part 1	Handwriting vs Digital Writing
Part 2	Gesture System
Part 3	Can You Understand This from Gesture Alone?
Part 4	Layered System Breakdown
Part 5	Dual Perspective

Stage3: Projection 2

Structure

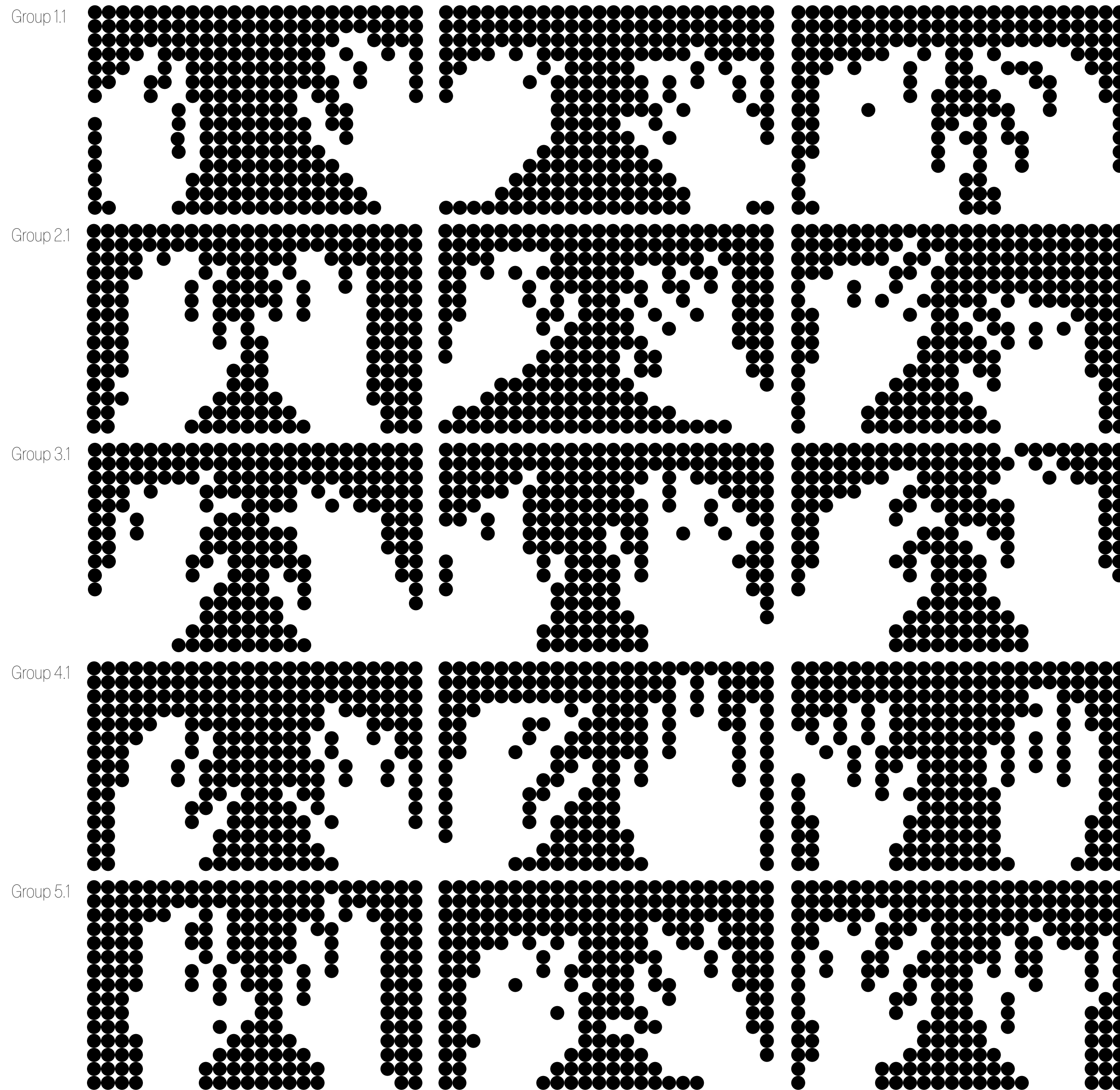
Part 1

01 Gesture Form

Handwriting vs Digital Writing

§ Between Input and Guesture: Writing Through Systems 2026

Handwriting reveals clear individual differences, while typing gestures become repetitive and less expressive.



Structure

Part 1	Handwriting vs Digital Writing
Part 2	Gesture System
Part 3	Can You Understand This from Gesture Alone?
Part 4	Layered System Breakdown
Part 5	Dual Perspective

Stage3: Projection 2

§ Between Input and Guesture: Writing Through Systems 2026

Structure

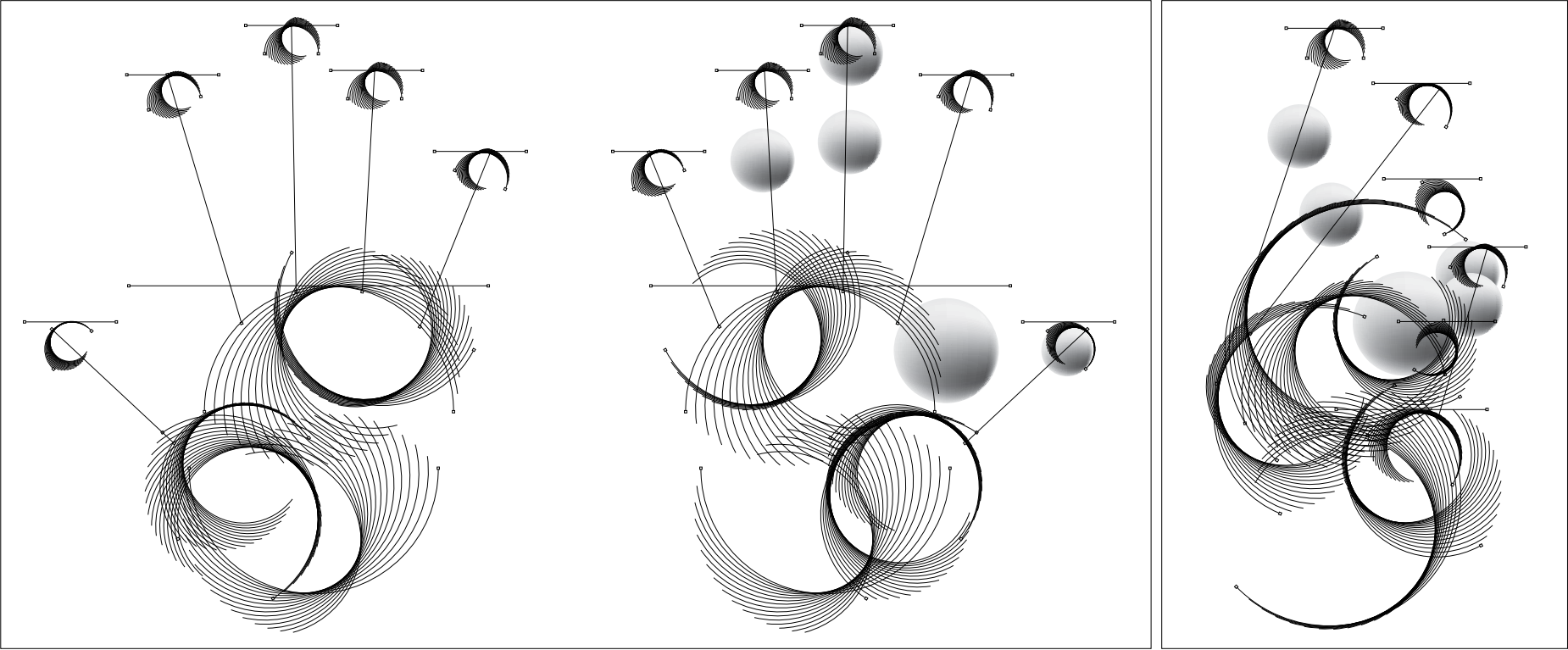
Part 1

Handwriting allows flexible interaction, while typing reduces contact to fixed, minimal points.

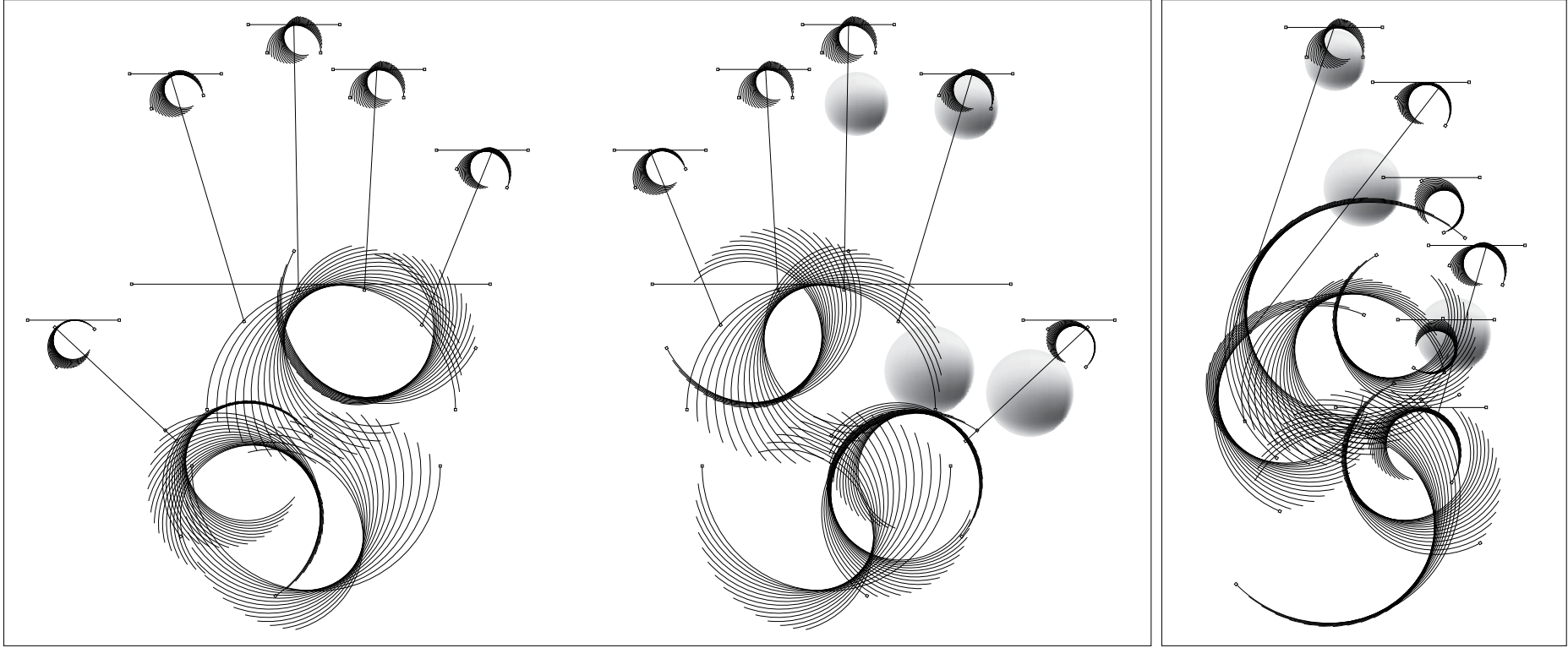
02 Contact Between Hand and Tool

Handwriting vs Digital Writing

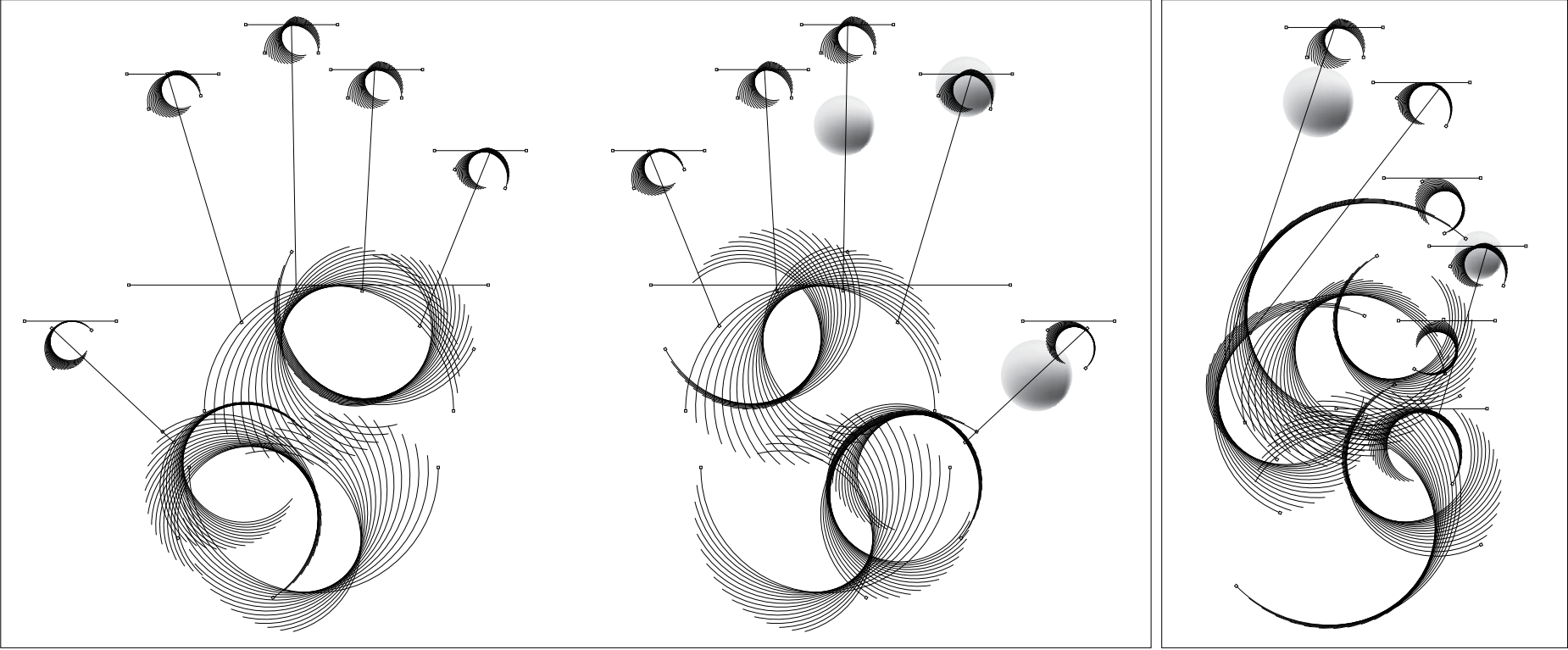
Group 1.2



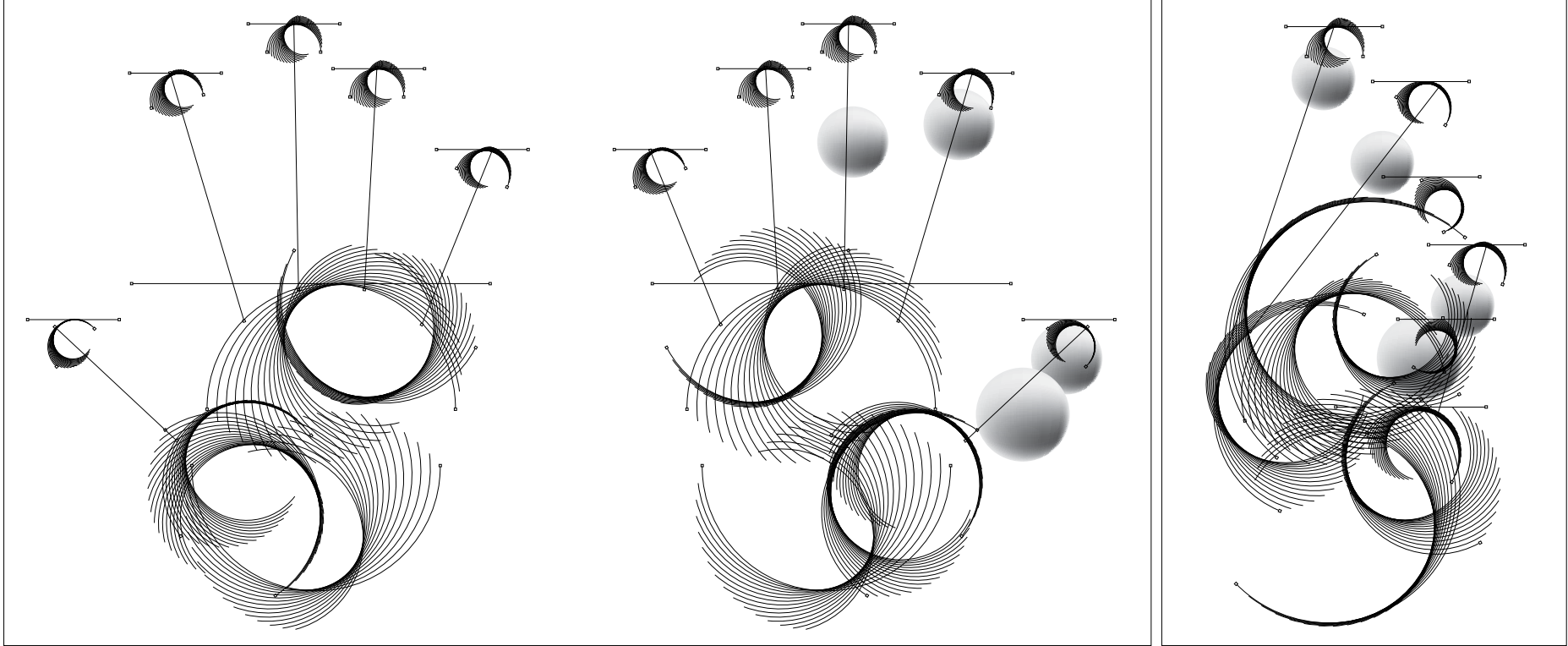
Group 2.2



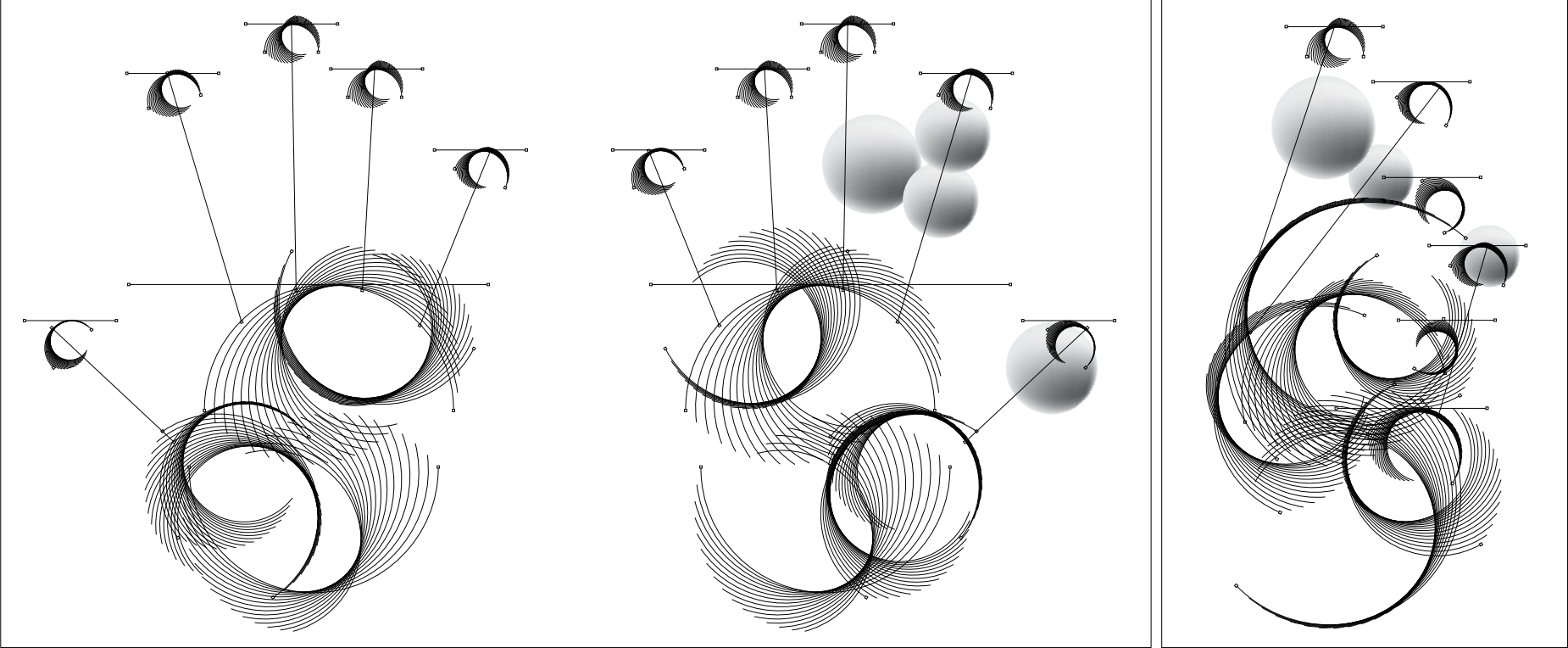
Group 3.2



Group 4.2



Group 5.2



Structure

Part 1	Handwriting vs Digital Writing
Part 2	Gesture System
Part 3	Can You Understand This from Gesture Alone?
Part 4	Layered System Breakdown
Part 5	Dual Perspective

Stage3: Projection 2

§ Between Input and Guesture: Writing Through Systems 2026

Structure

Part 1

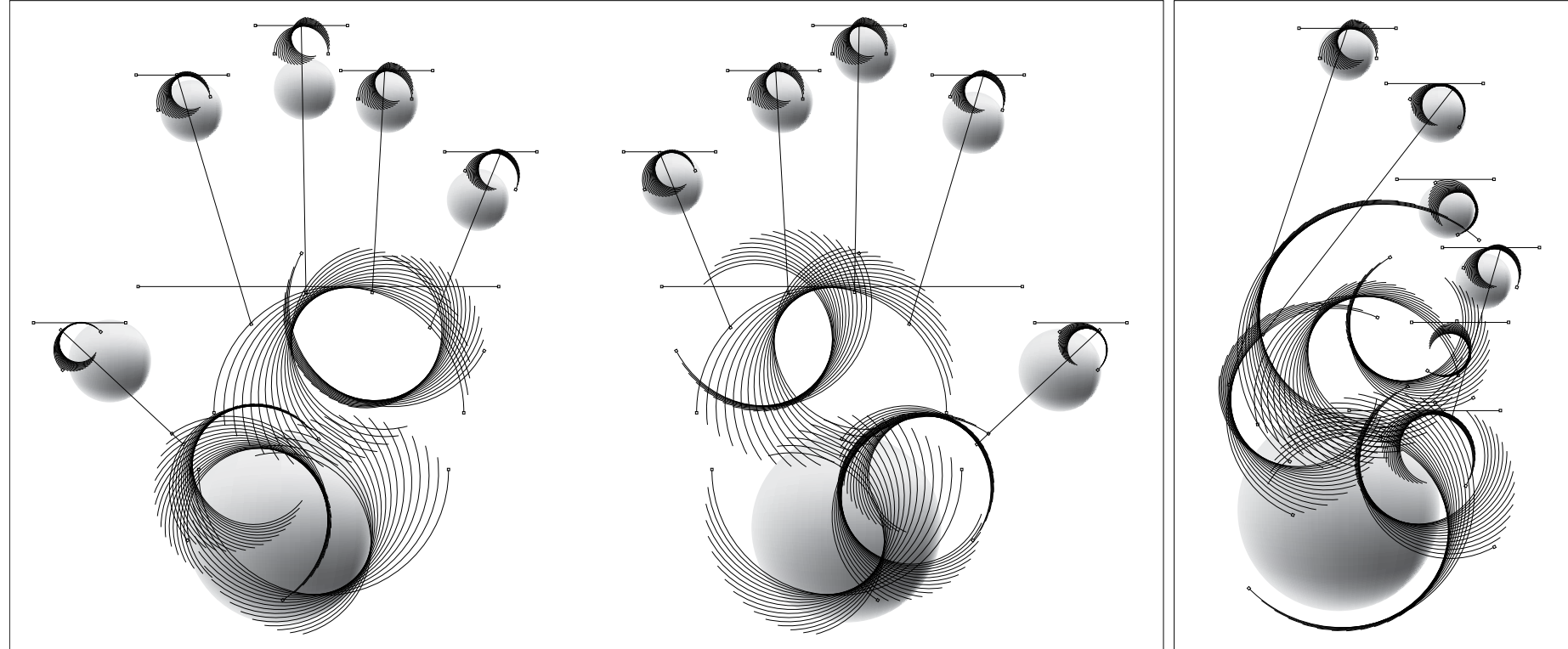
In handwriting, contact is flexible and varied

In typing, contact is minimal and fixed Interaction becomes more restricted

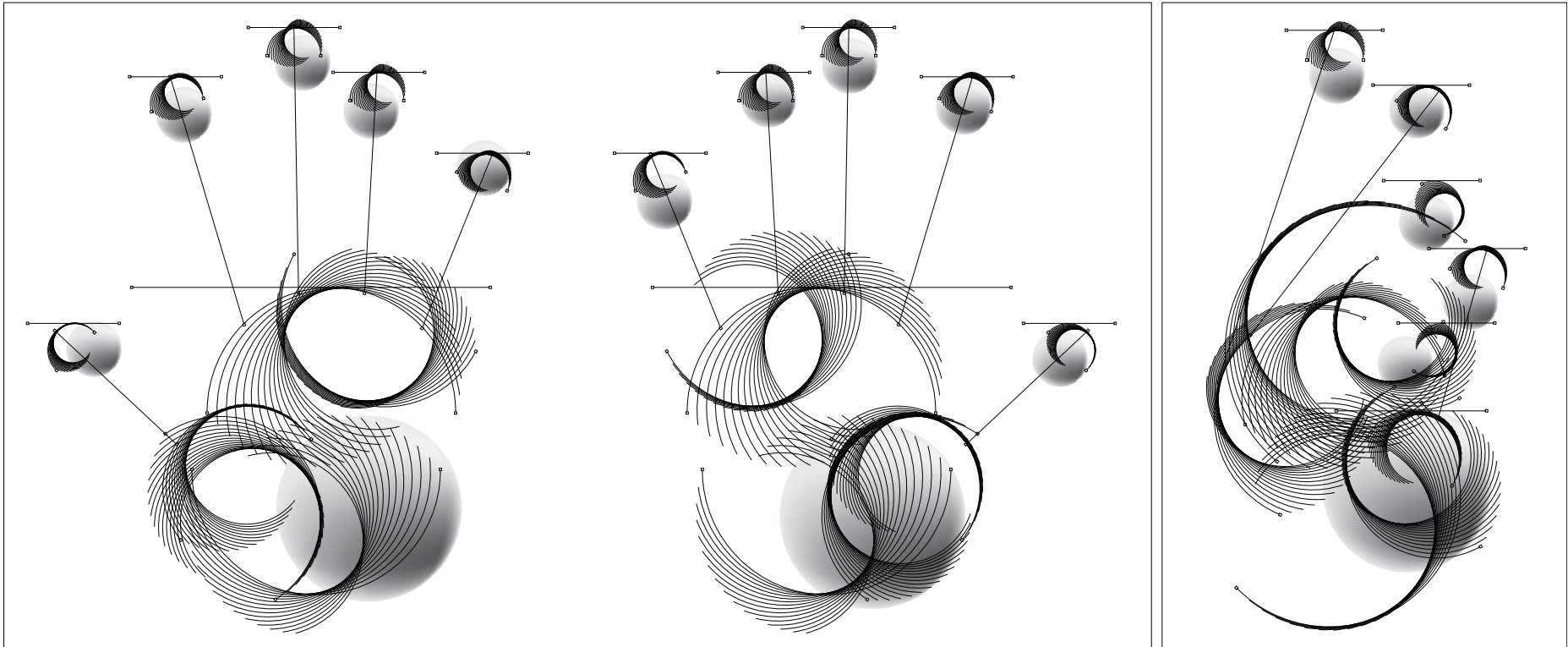
02 Contact Between Hand and Tool

Handwriting vs Digital Writing

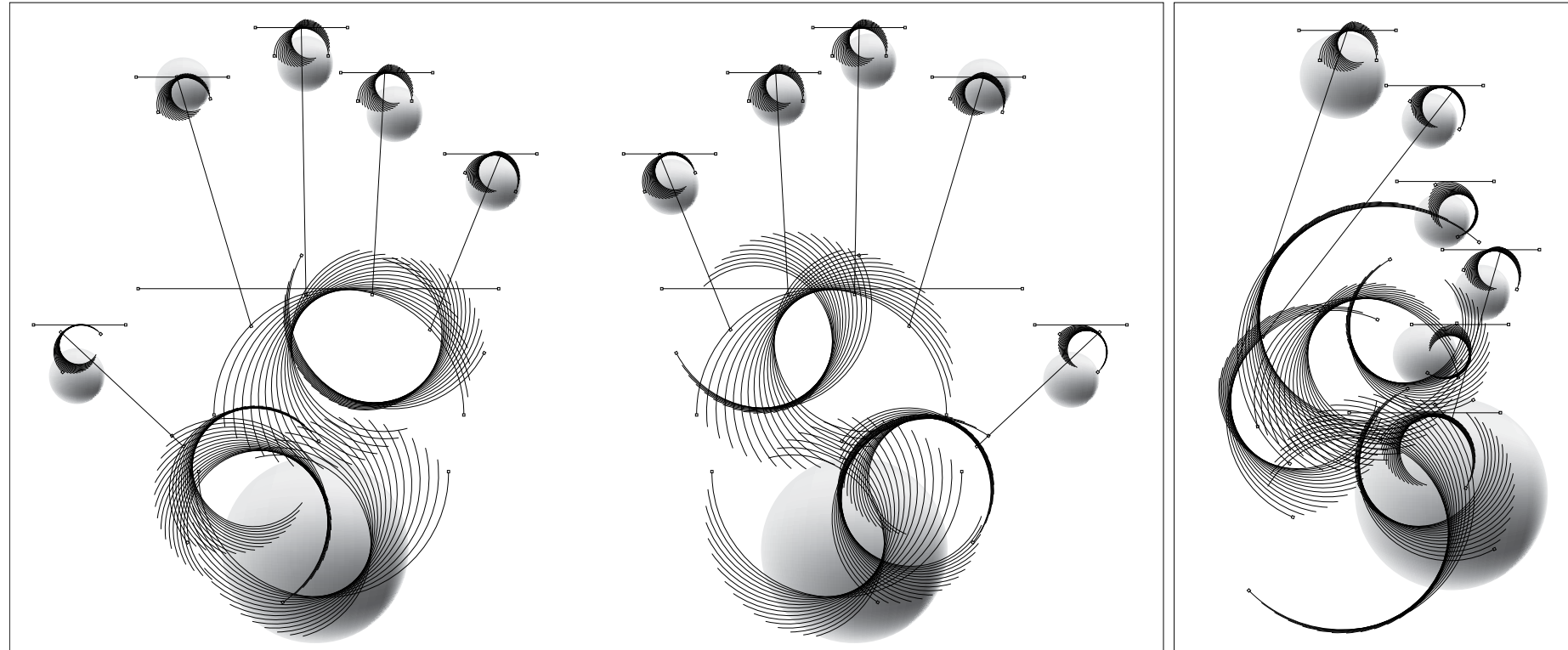
Group 1.2



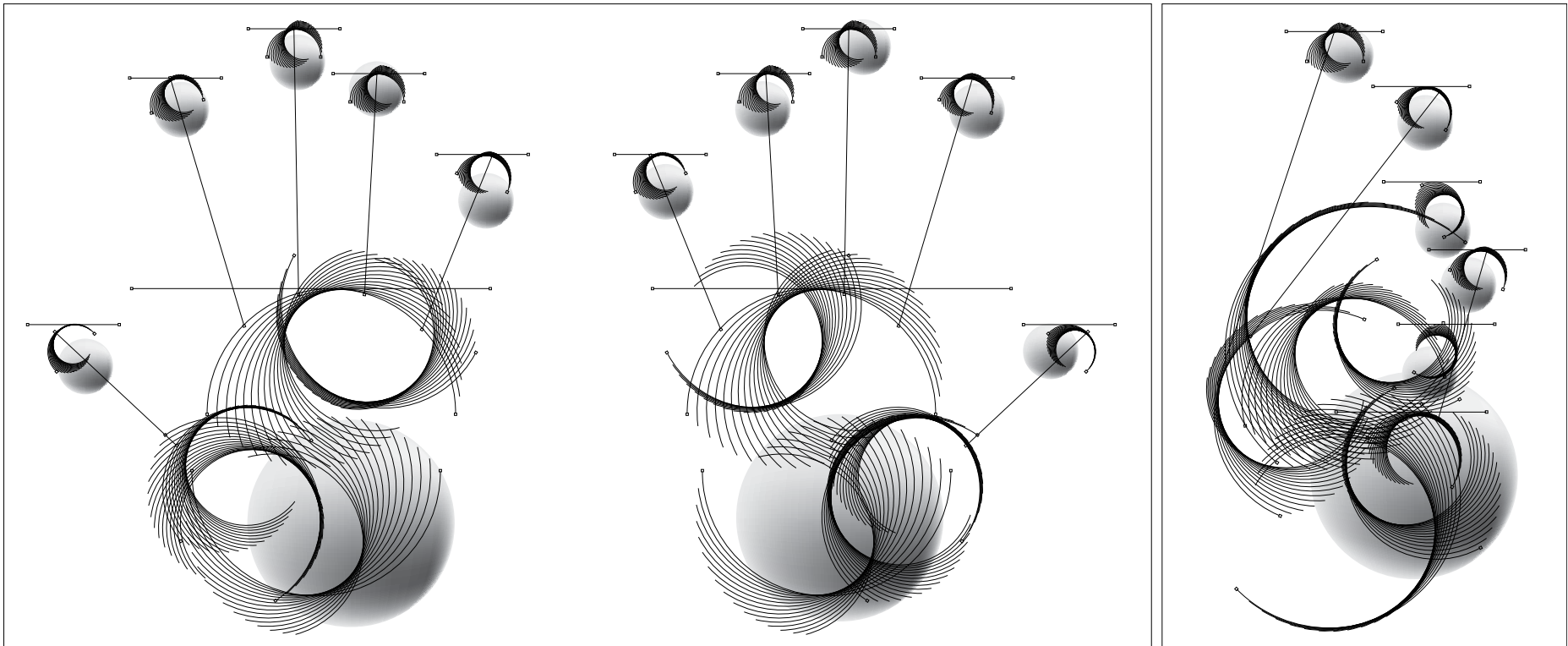
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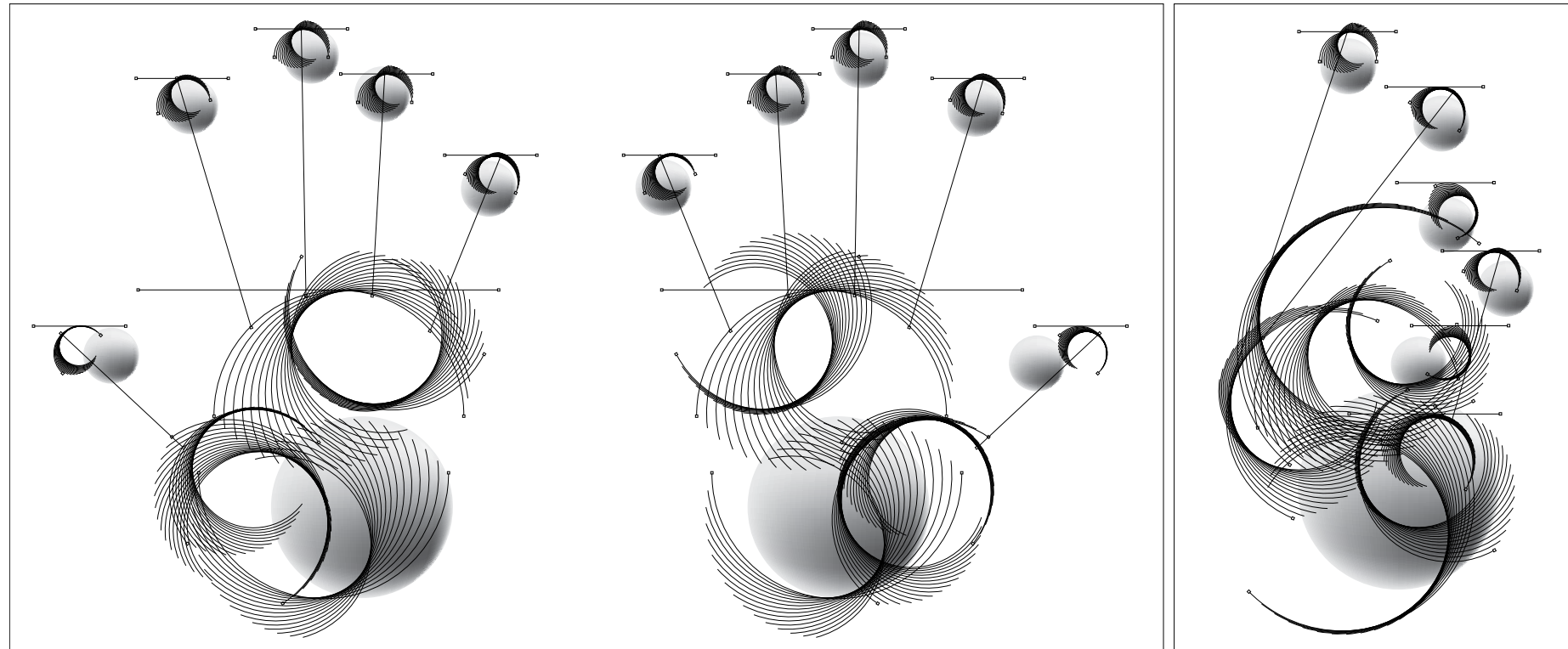
Group 3.2



Group 4.2



Group 5.2



Structure

Part 1	Handwriting vs Digital Writing
Part 2	Gesture System
Part 3	Can You Understand This from Gesture Alone?
Part 4	Layered System Breakdown
Part 5	Dual Perspective

Stage3: Projection 2

§ Between Input and Guesture: Writing Through Systems 2026

Structure

Part 1

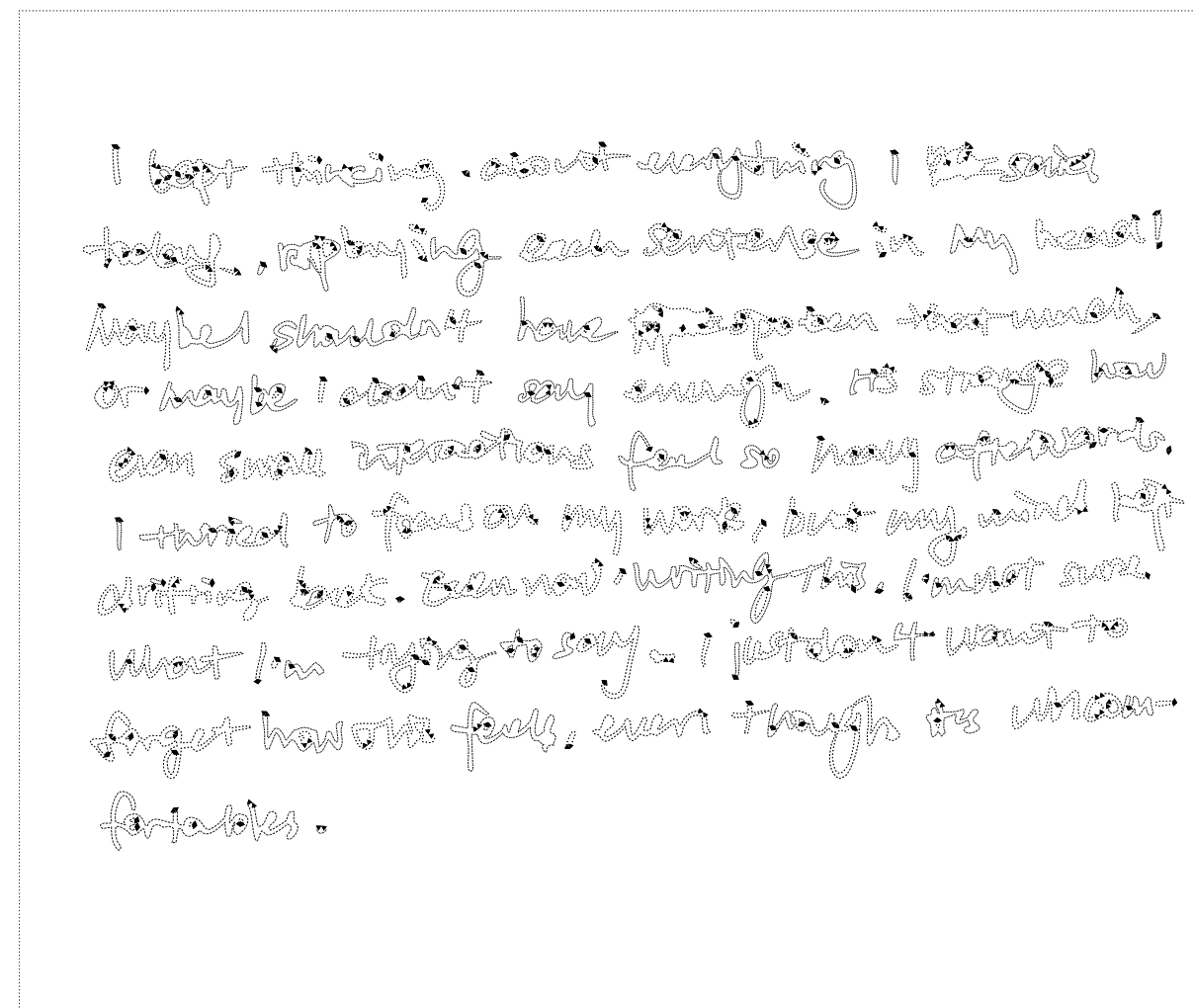
03 Trace Produced by Writing

Handwriting vs Digital Writing

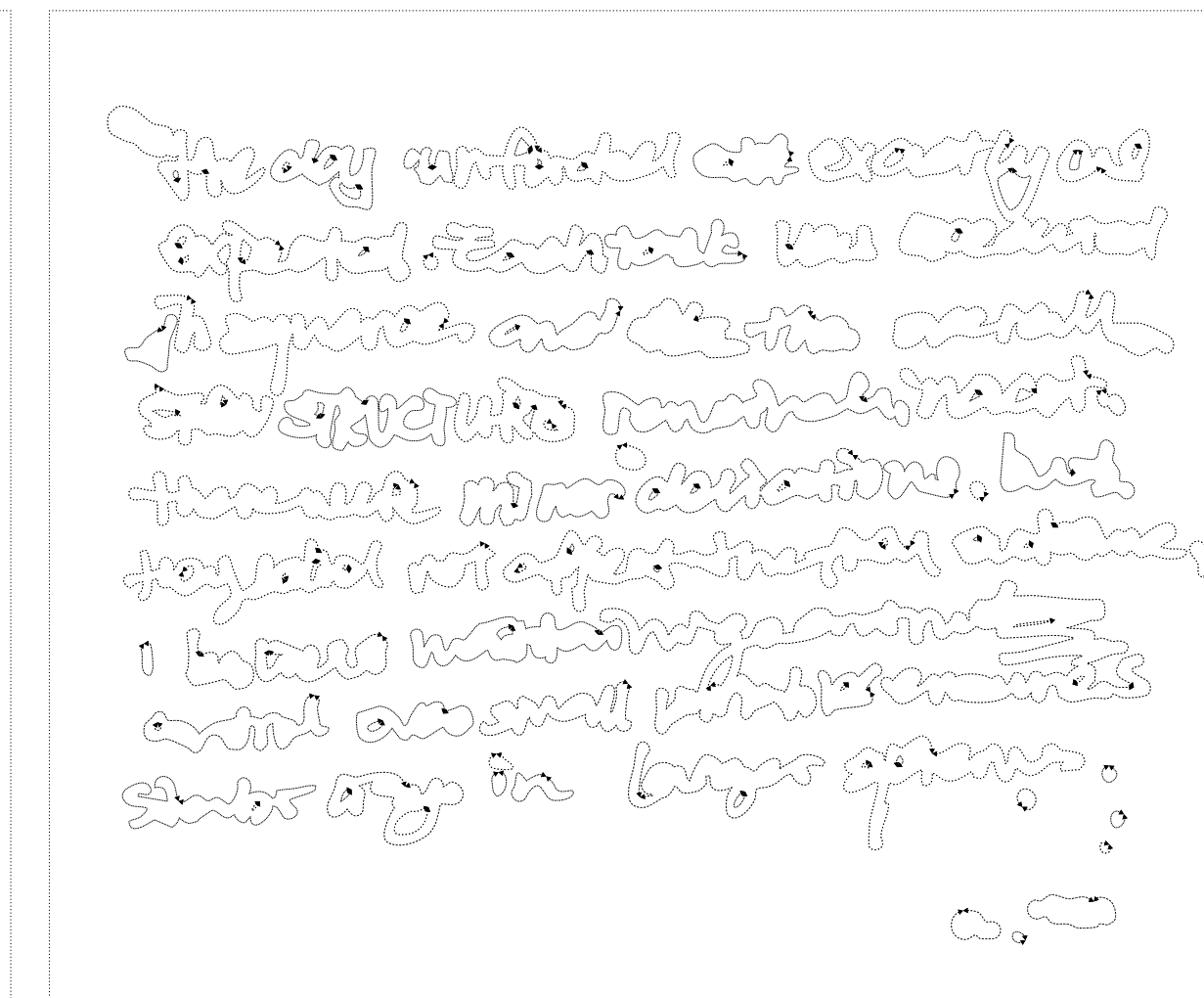
Compare the visible traces produced by handwriting and typing.

Handwriting directly reflects gesture, while typing produces uniform, standardised outputs.

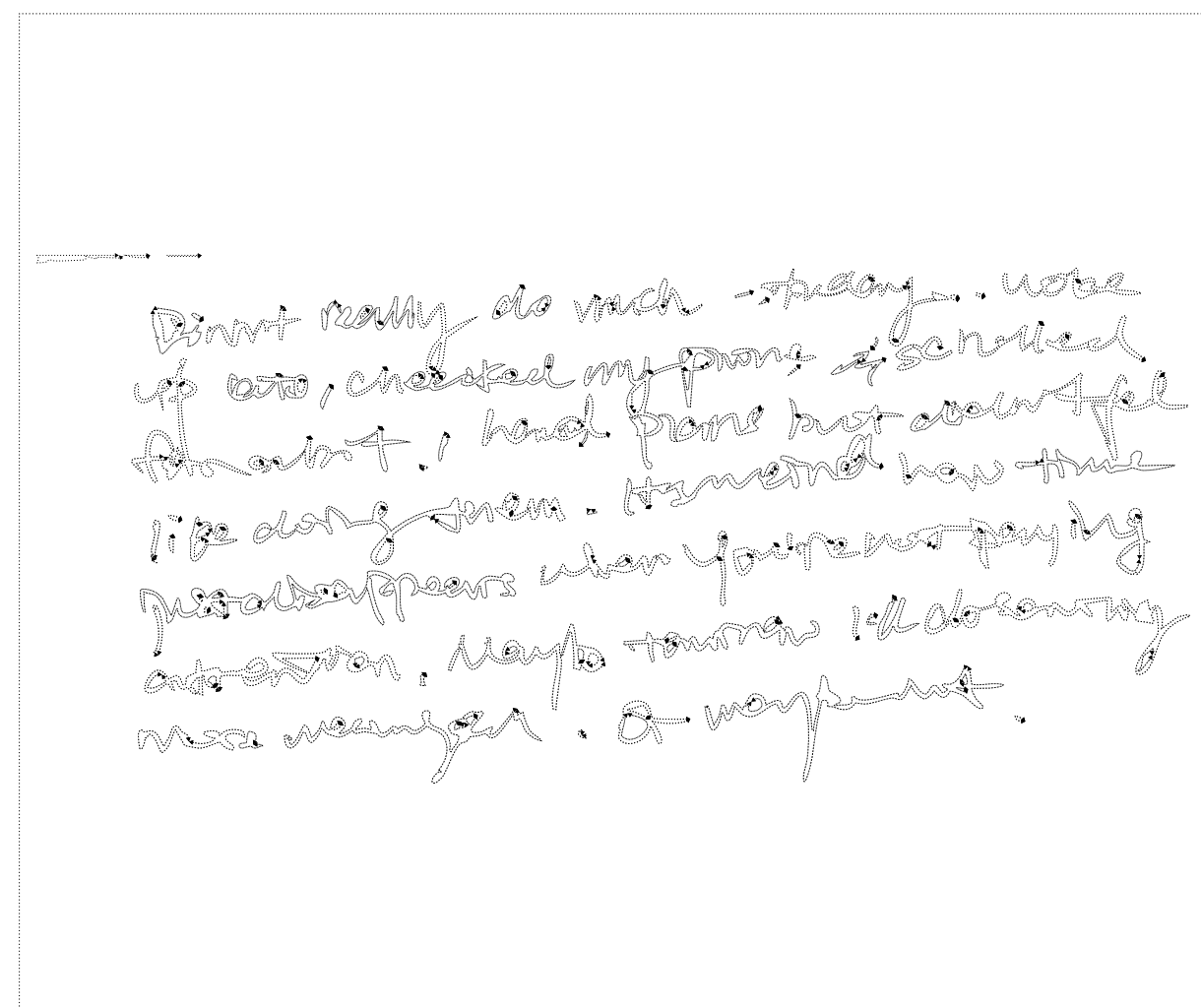
Group 1.3



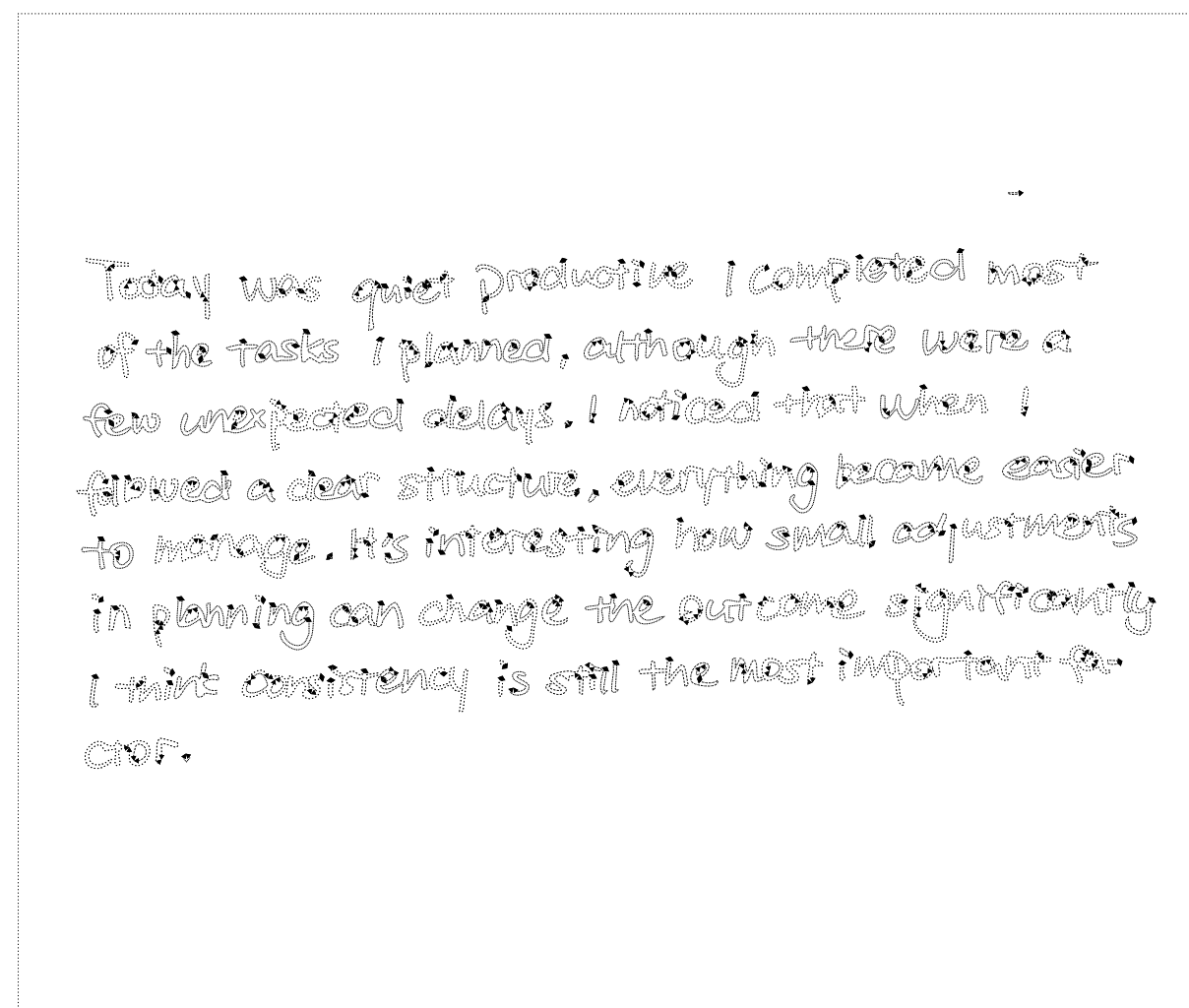
Group 2.3



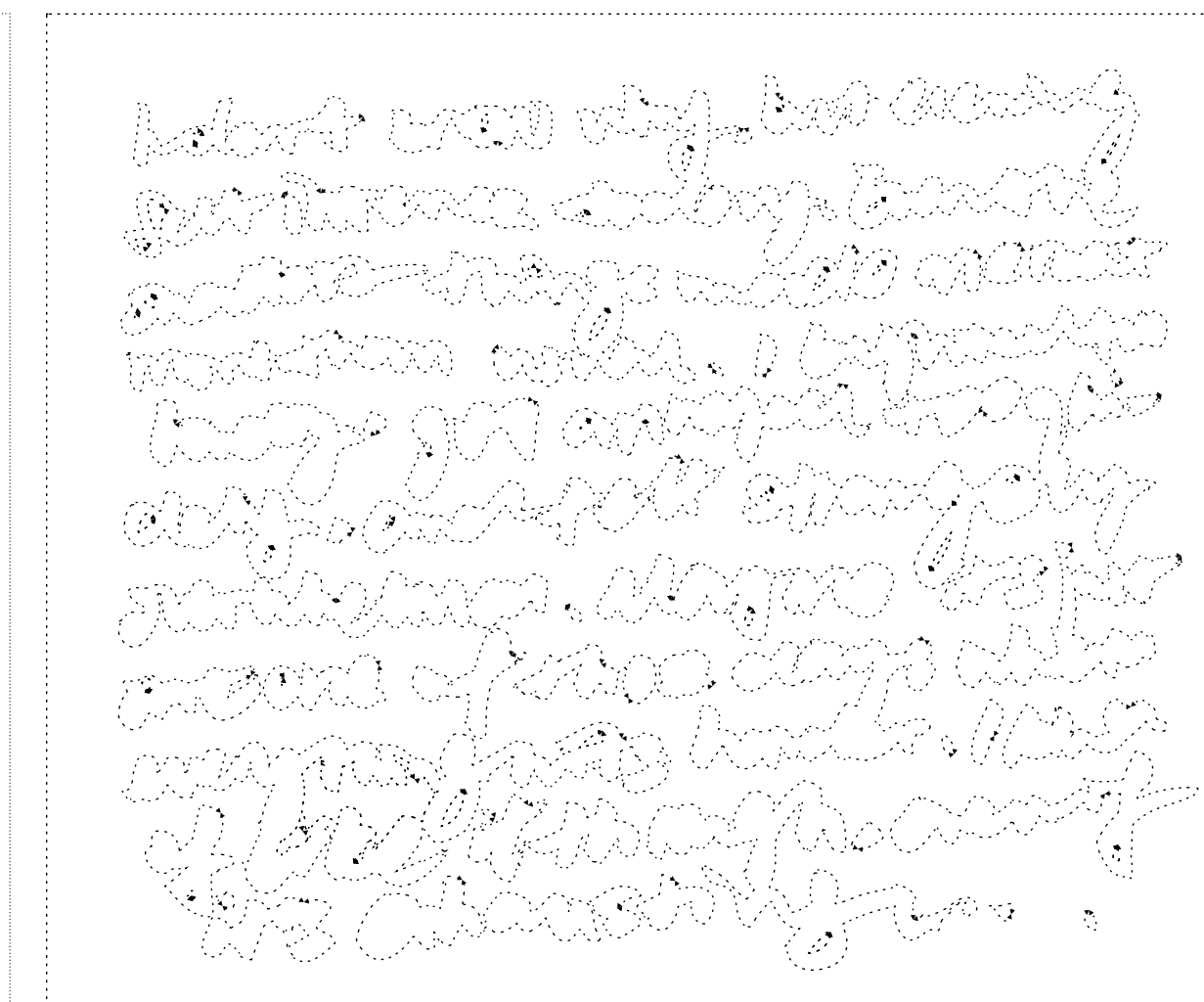
Group 3.3



Group 4.3



Group 5.3



Structure	
Part 1	Handwriting vs Digital Writing
Part 2	Gesture System
Part 3	Can You Understand This from Gesture Alone?
Part 4	Layered System Breakdown
Part 5	Dual Perspective

Stage3: Projection 2

Structure

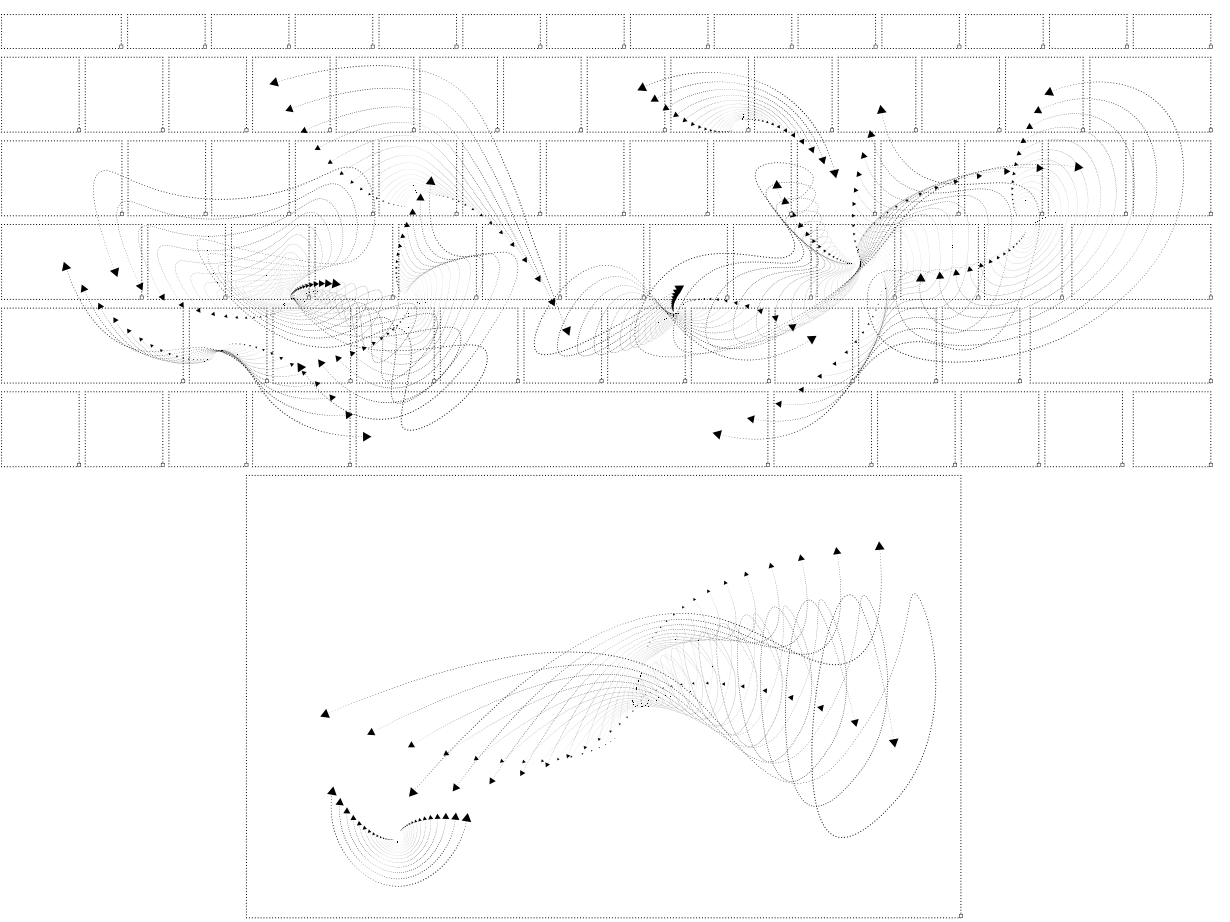
03 Trace Produced by Writing

Part 1

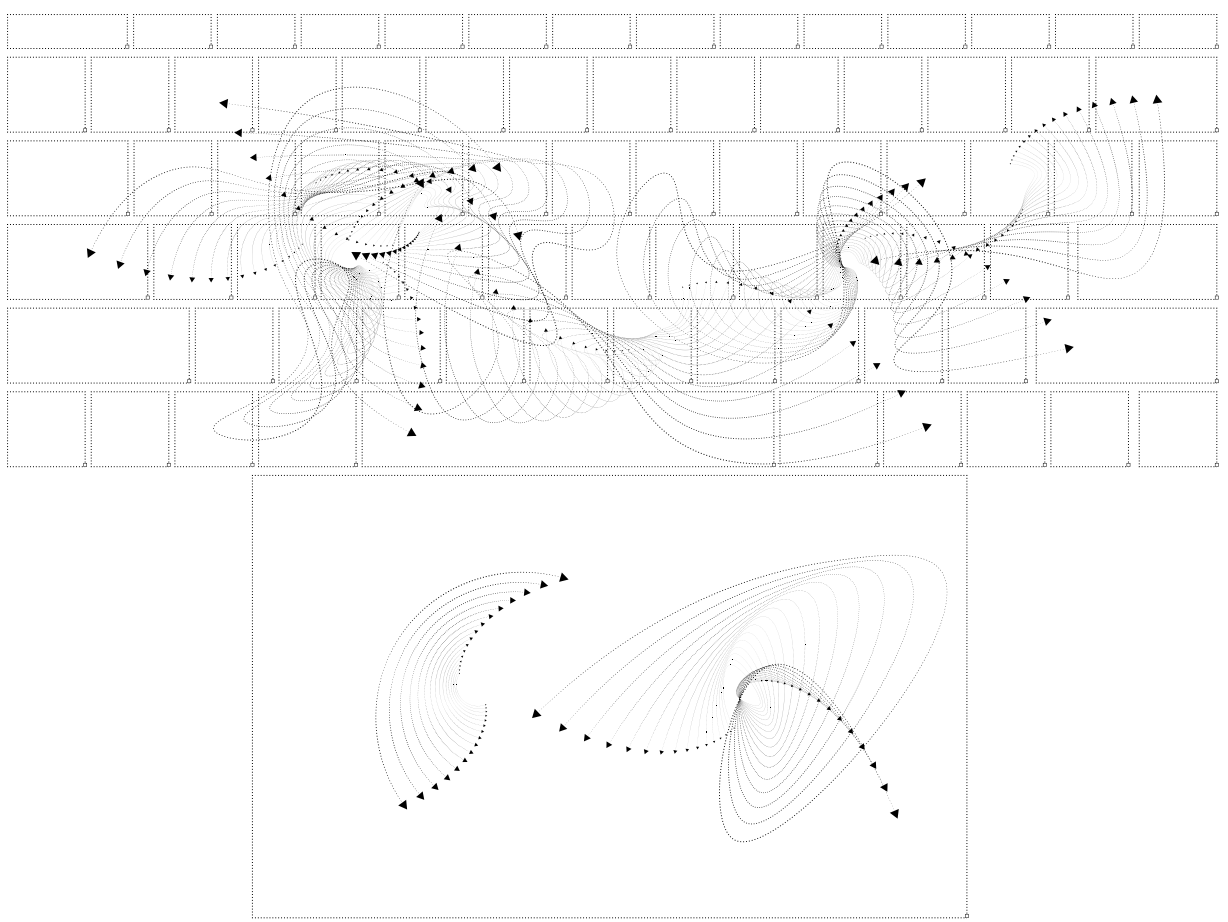
Handwriting vs Digital Writing

§ Between Input and Gesture: Writing Through Systems 2026

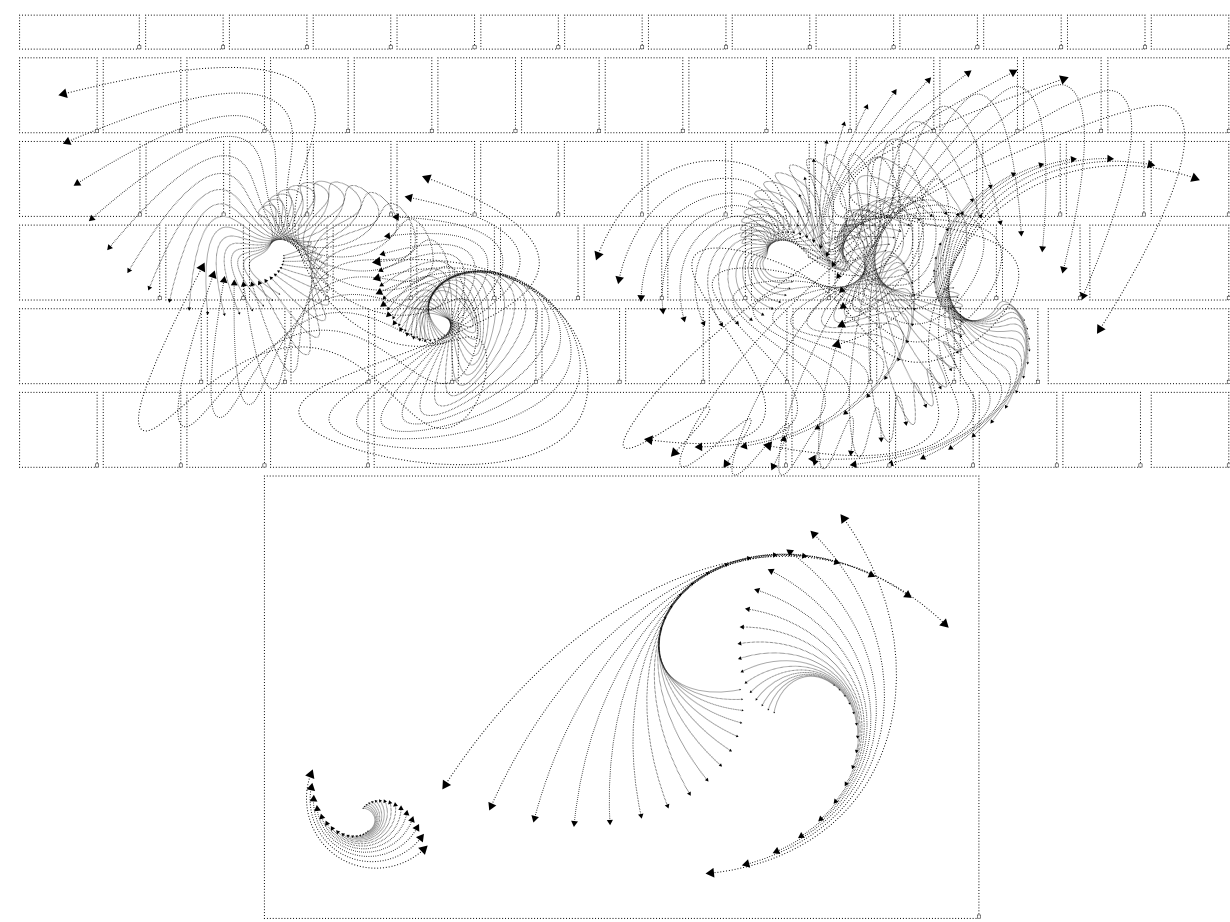
Group 1.3



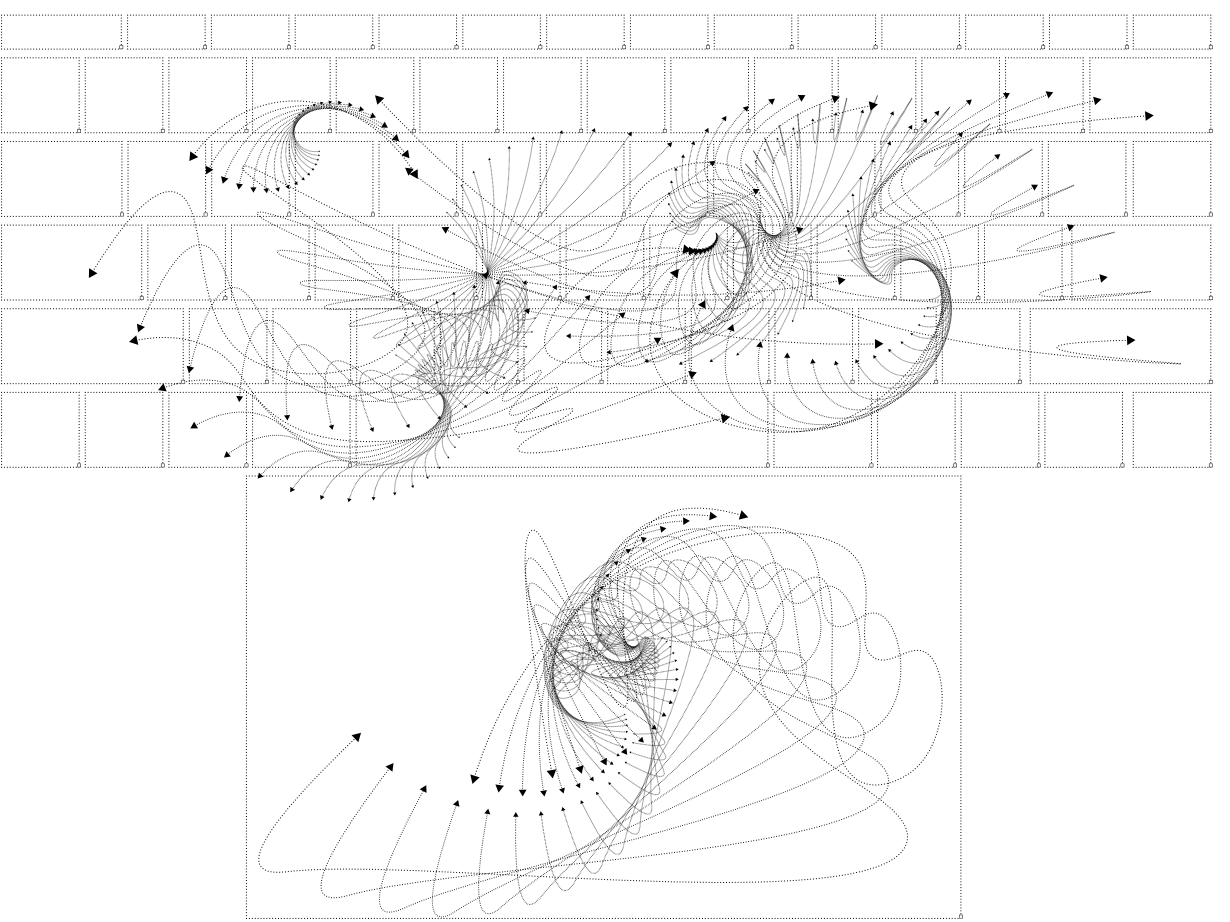
Group 2.3



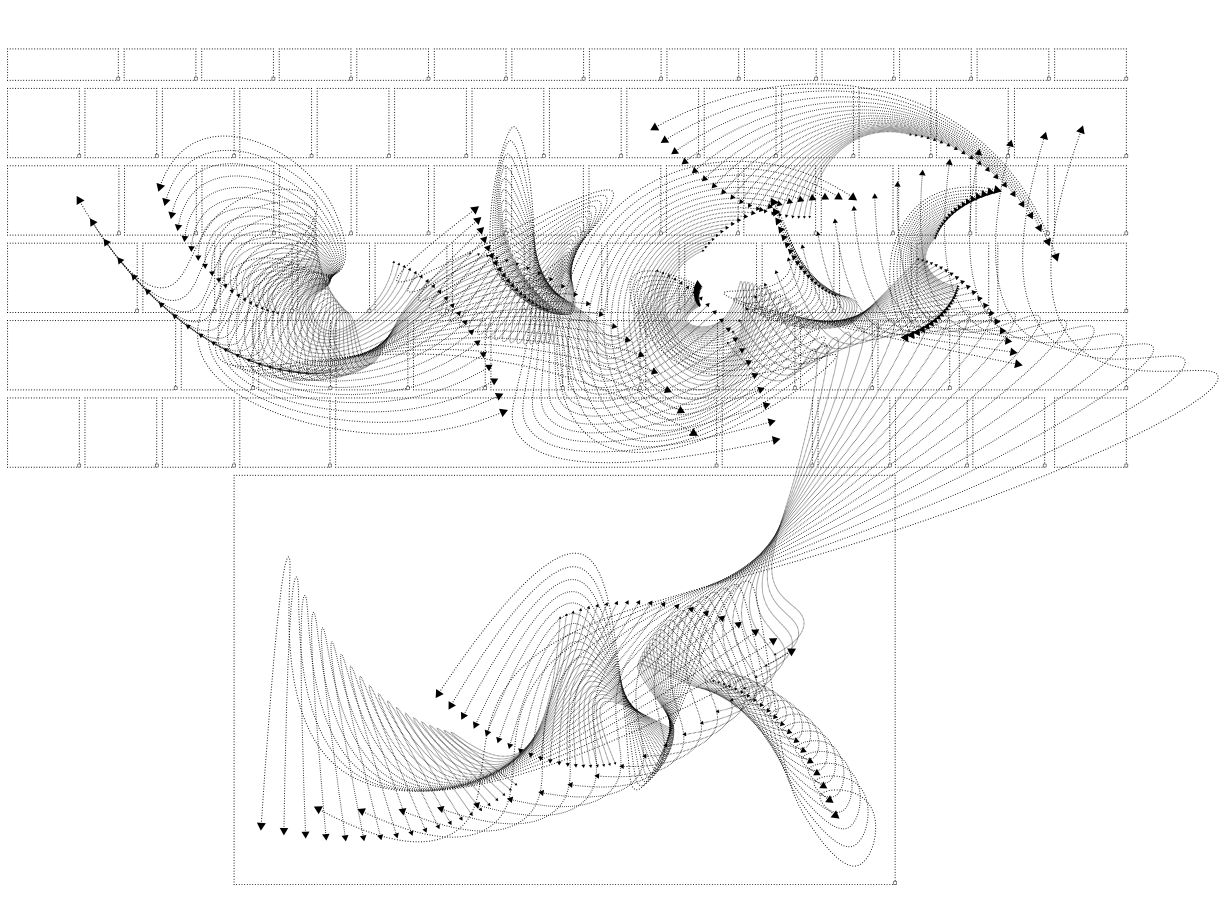
Group 3.3



Group 4.3



Group 5.3



Structure

Part 1	Handwriting vs Digital Writing
Part 2	Gesture System
Part 3	Can You Understand This from Gesture Alone?
Part 4	Layered System Breakdown
Part 5	Dual Perspective

Stage3: Projection 2

§ Between Input and Guesture: Writing Through Systems 2026
§ Convert the keys into gesture graphics and test whether the gestures themselves can still convey meaning.

Structure

Part 2

Gesture System

Translate each key into a gesture unit and reconstruct text using gesture icons.

Gestures alone are insufficient to convey meaning without system interpretation.



Structure

Part 1	Handwriting vs Digital Writing
Part 2	Gesture System
Part 3	Can You Understand This from Gesture Alone?
Part 4	Layered System Breakdown
Part 5	Dual Perspective

Stage3: Projection 2

Structure

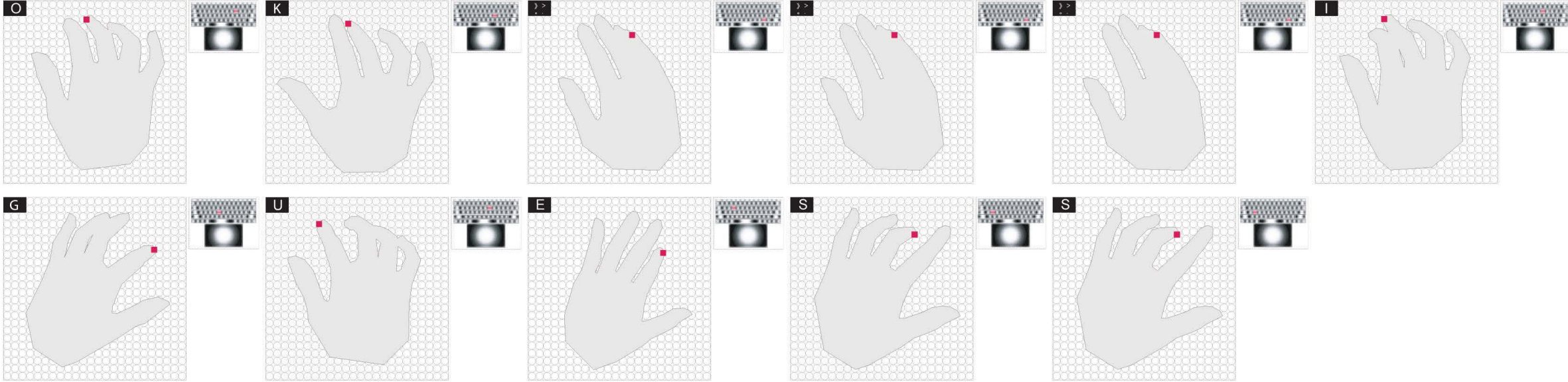
Part 3

Can You Understand This from Gesture Alone?

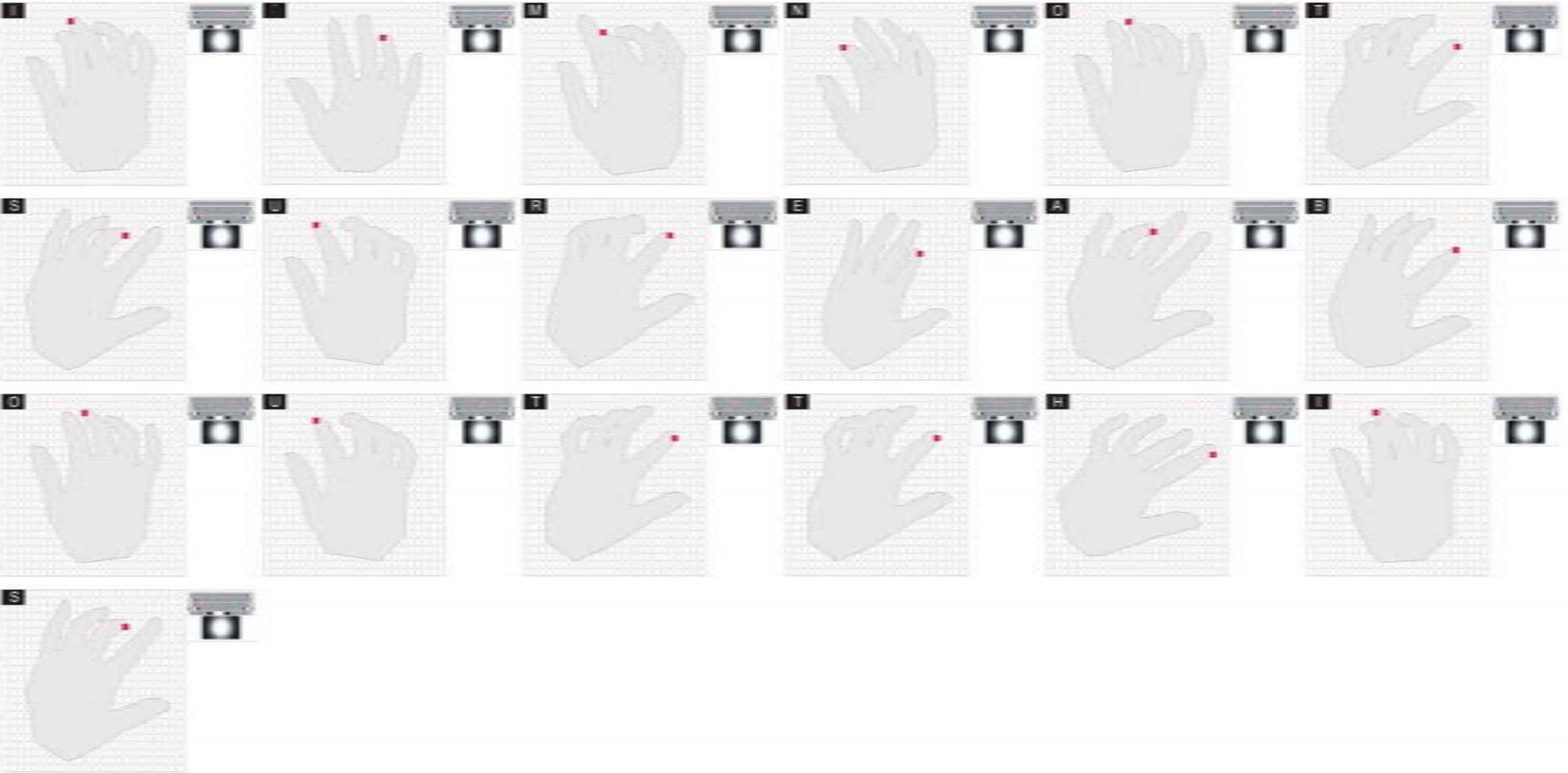
§ Between Input and Guesture: Writing Through Systems 2026
§ Proof: After being disconnected from the system, gestures become blurred and difficult to interpret.

gesture → meaningless system

ok...I guess



I'm not sure about this



Structure

Part 1	Handwriting vs Digital Writing
Part 2	Gesture System
Part 3	Can You Understand This from Gesture Alone?
Part 4	Layered System Breakdown
Part 5	Dual Perspective

Stage3: Projection 2

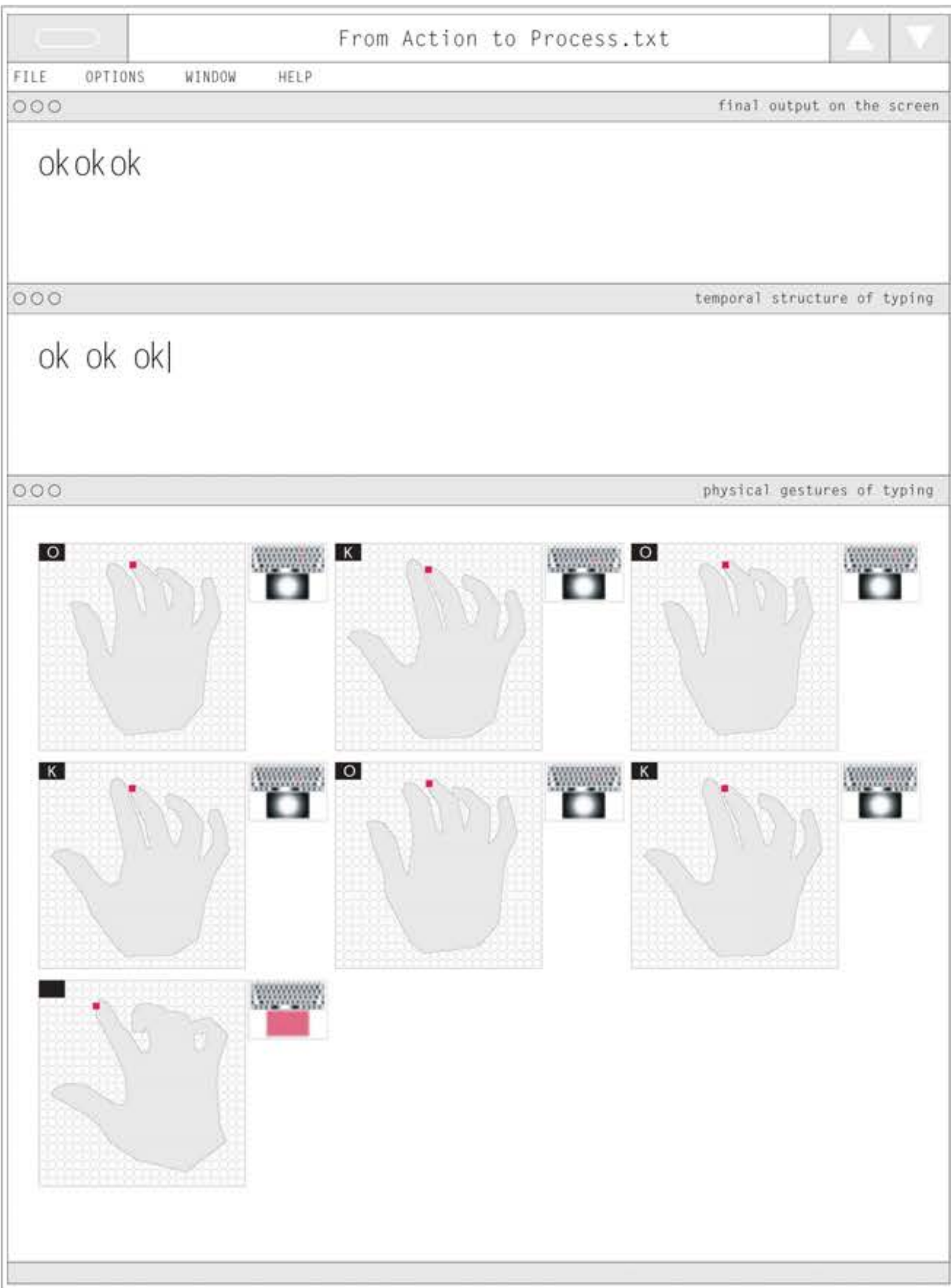
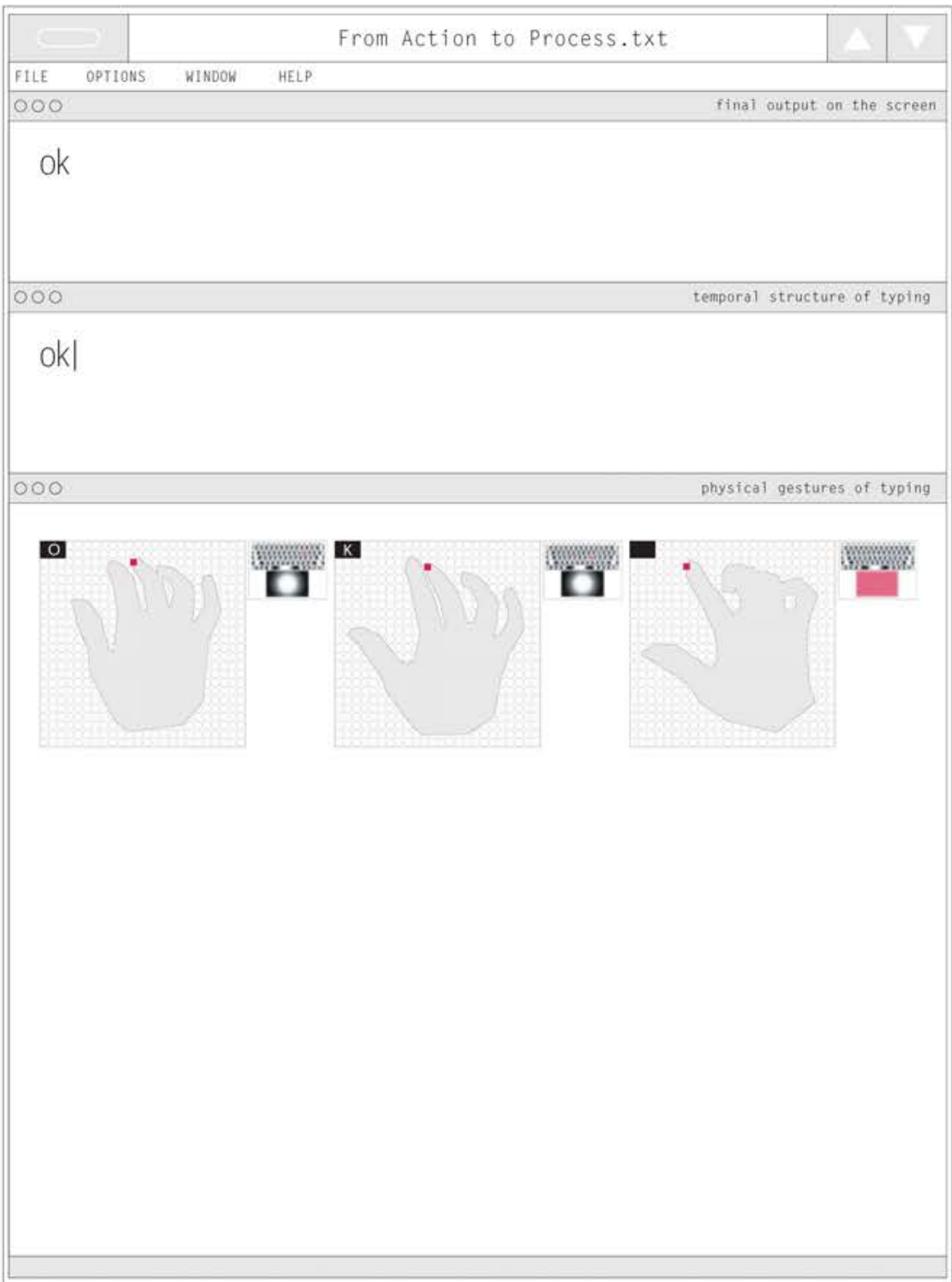
Structure

Part 4

Layered System Breakdown

§ Between Input and Guesture: Writing Through Systems 2026
§ Analysis: How is personality distributed in rhythm, pauses, key presses, and system output?

The top layer represents the final output on the screen.
The middle layer visualises the temporal structure of typing.
The bottom layer represents the physical gestures of typing.



Structure

Part 1	Handwriting vs Digital Writing
Part 2	Gesture System
Part 3	Can You Understand This from Gesture Alone?
Part 4	Layered System Breakdown
Part 5	Dual Perspective

Stage3: Projection 2**Structure**

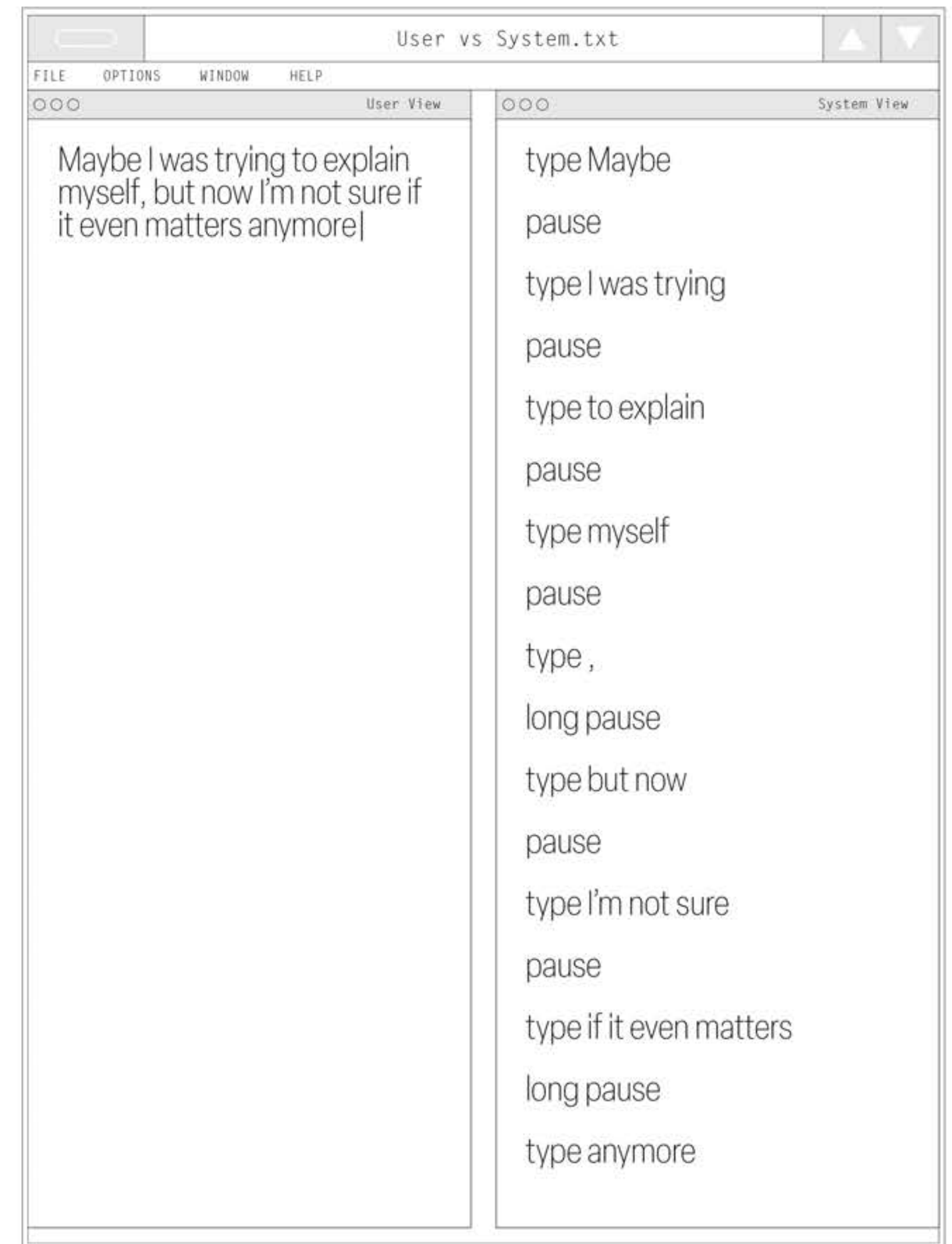
Part 5

Dual Perspective

§ Between Input and Gesture: Writing Through Systems 2026
§ It is further proposed that what users see is the result, while what the system sees is the process.

This experiment introduces two perspectives: the user and the system.

From the user's perspective, typing is mostly invisible — we only see the final text or a "typing..." indicator. However, from the system's perspective, every action during typing is recorded and visible.

**Structure**

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Stage3: Projection 2

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Projection2 does not only show that gesture becomes less expressive; it investigates where expression and individuality move next.

Projection1 showed me that gestures change with writing tools. Projection2 asks what this change means for individuality in digital writing.

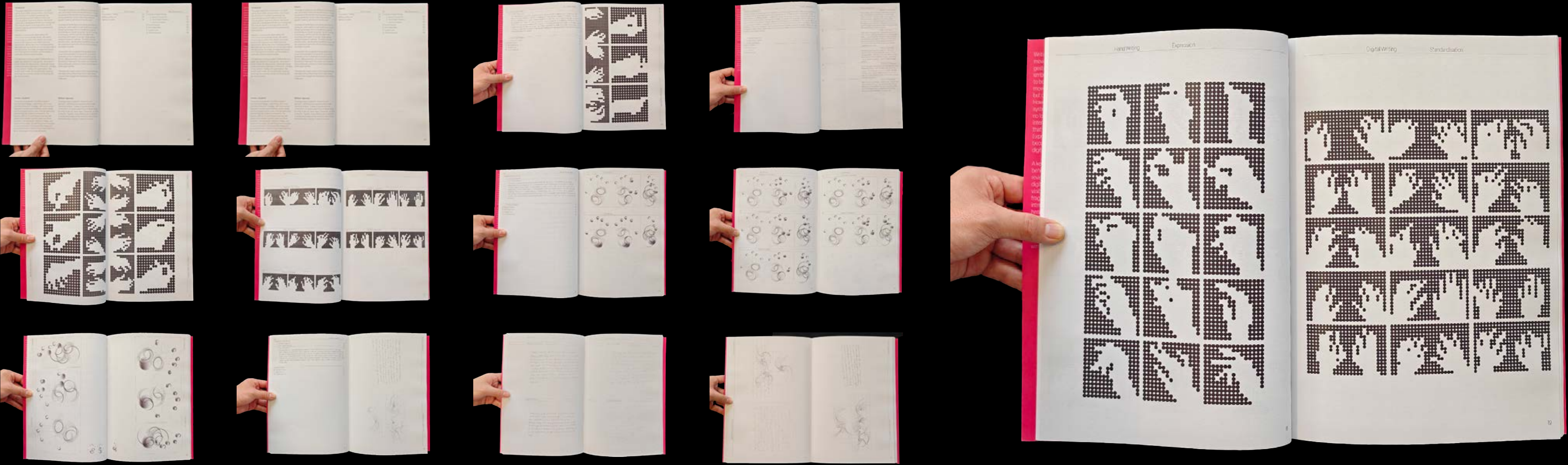
This project investigates how individuality is expressed, transformed, and redistributed through different writing systems, particularly in the shift from handwriting to digital writing. It explores how traditional handwriting allows personality and emotion to be directly visible through gesture, movement, pressure, and trace, while digital writing gradually reduces the expressive clarity of gesture and transfers individuality into layered system processes such as rhythm, pause, editing behaviour, and output construction.

Through visual experiments, system-based analysis, and publication design, the project examines how writing technologies reshape the relationship between body, expression, and communication in contemporary digital environments.

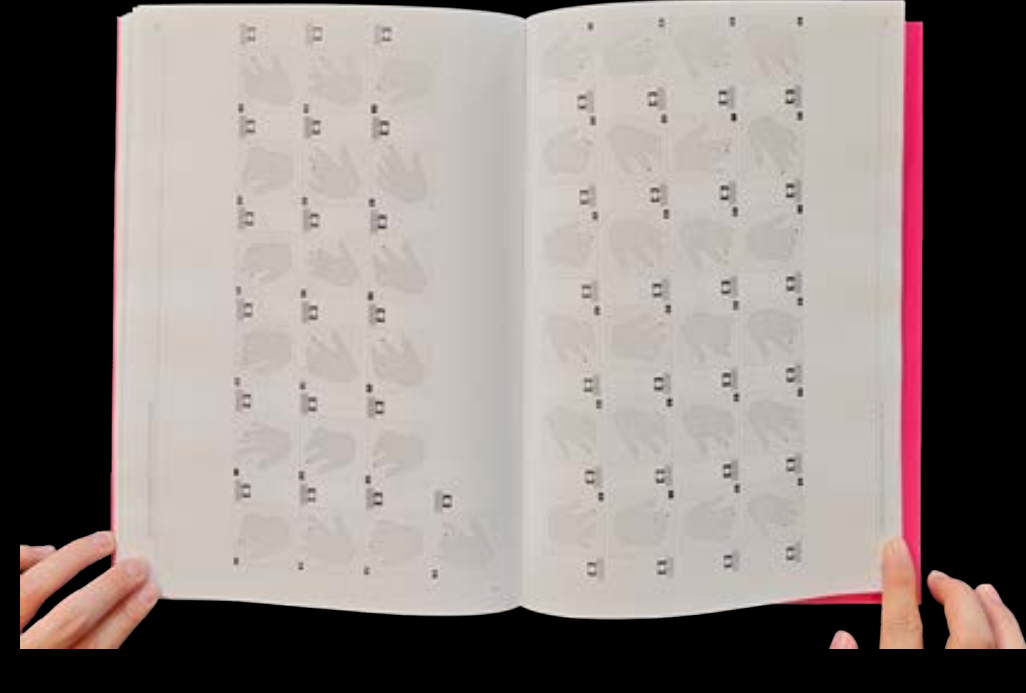
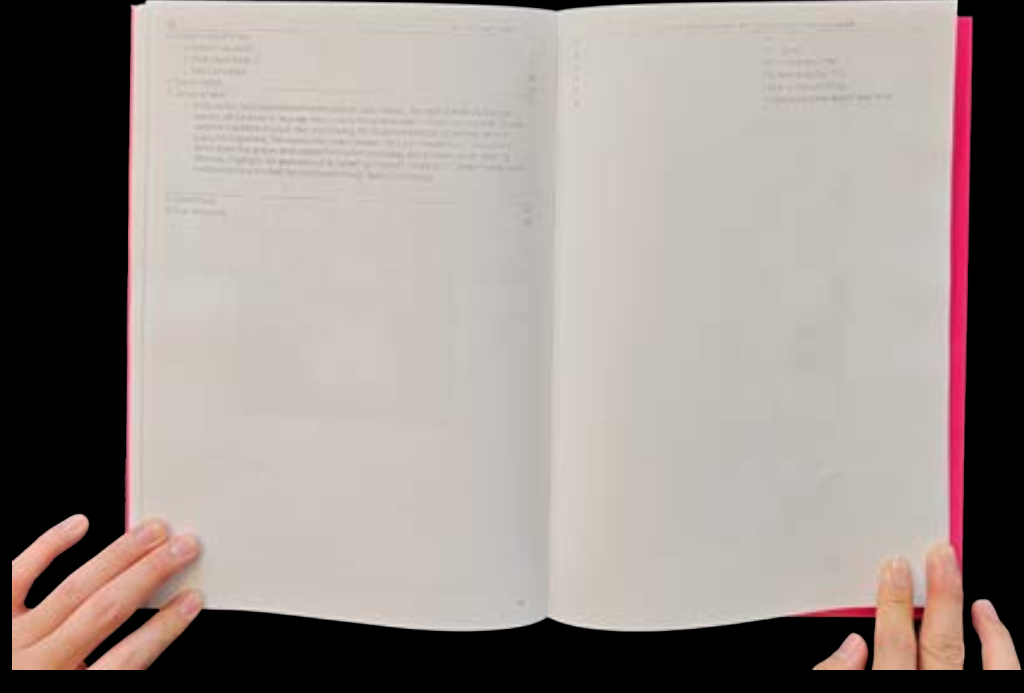
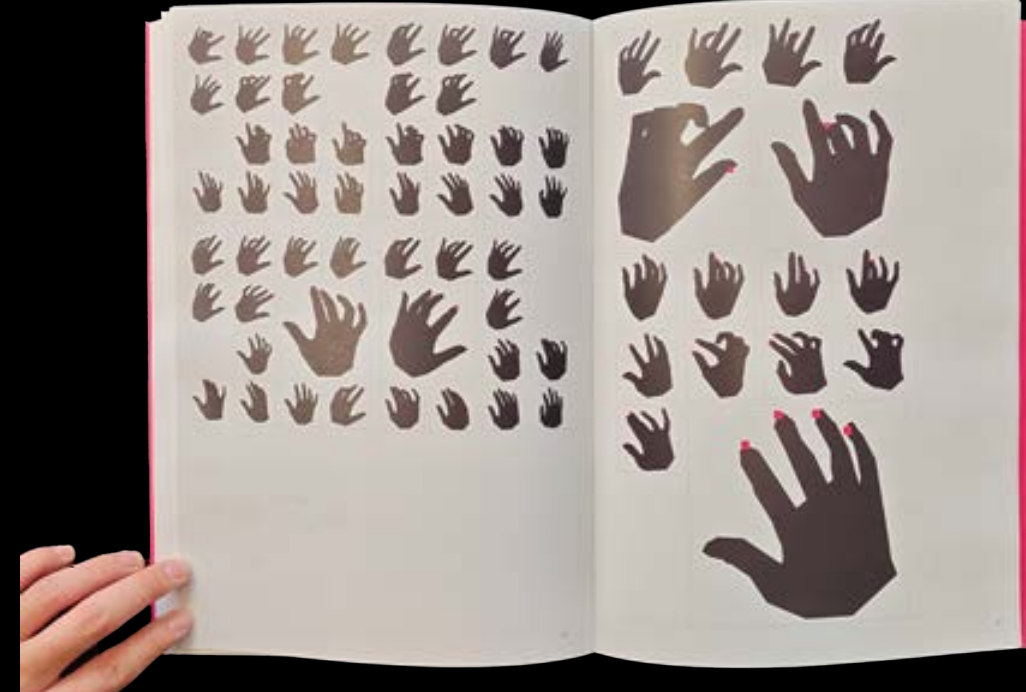
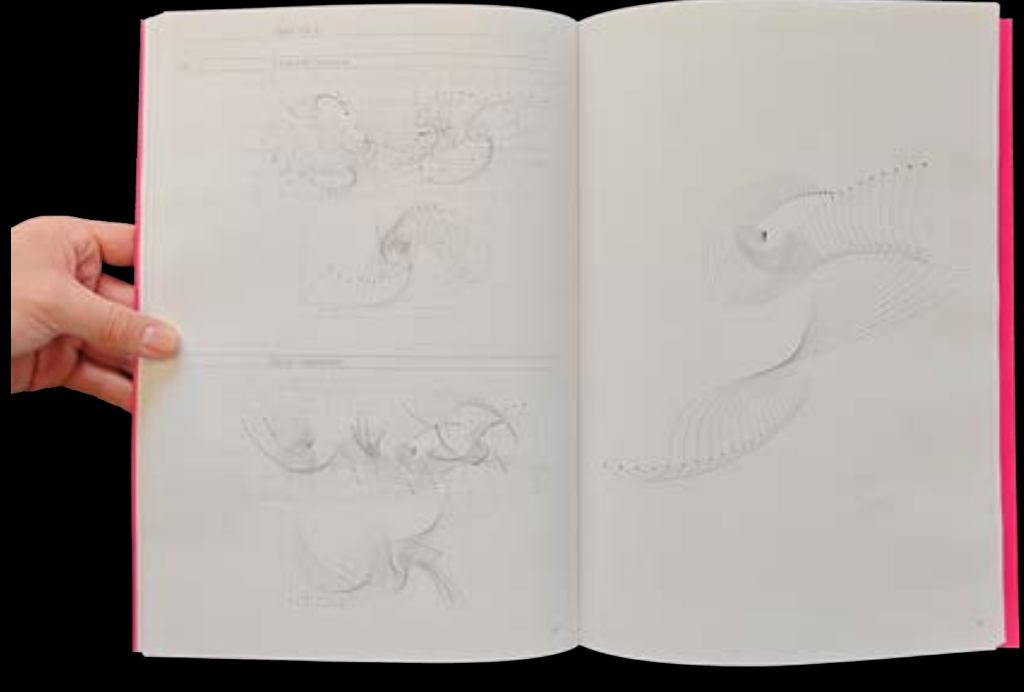
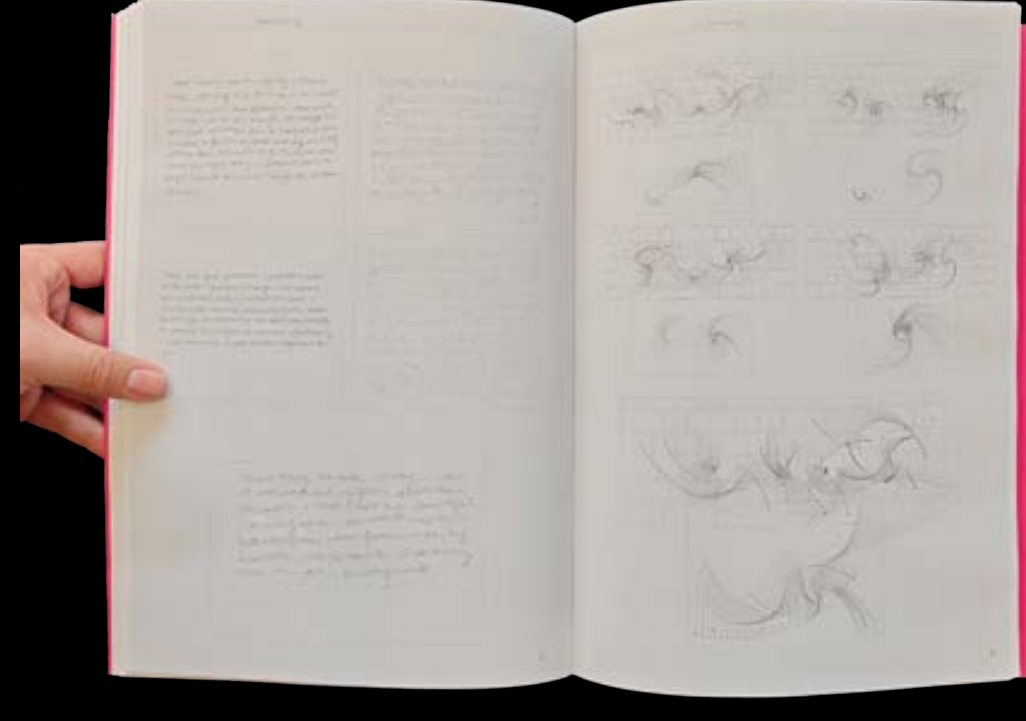
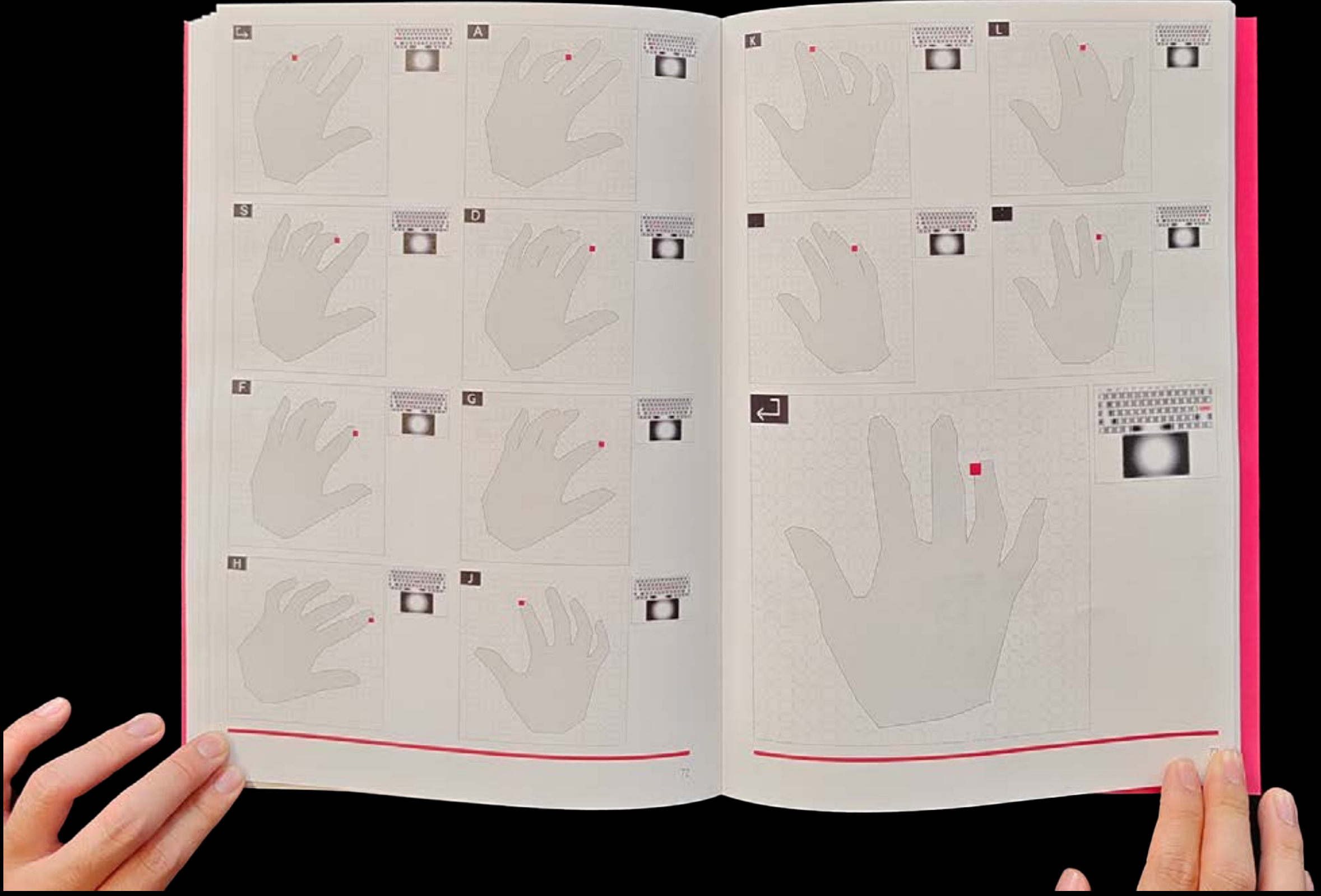




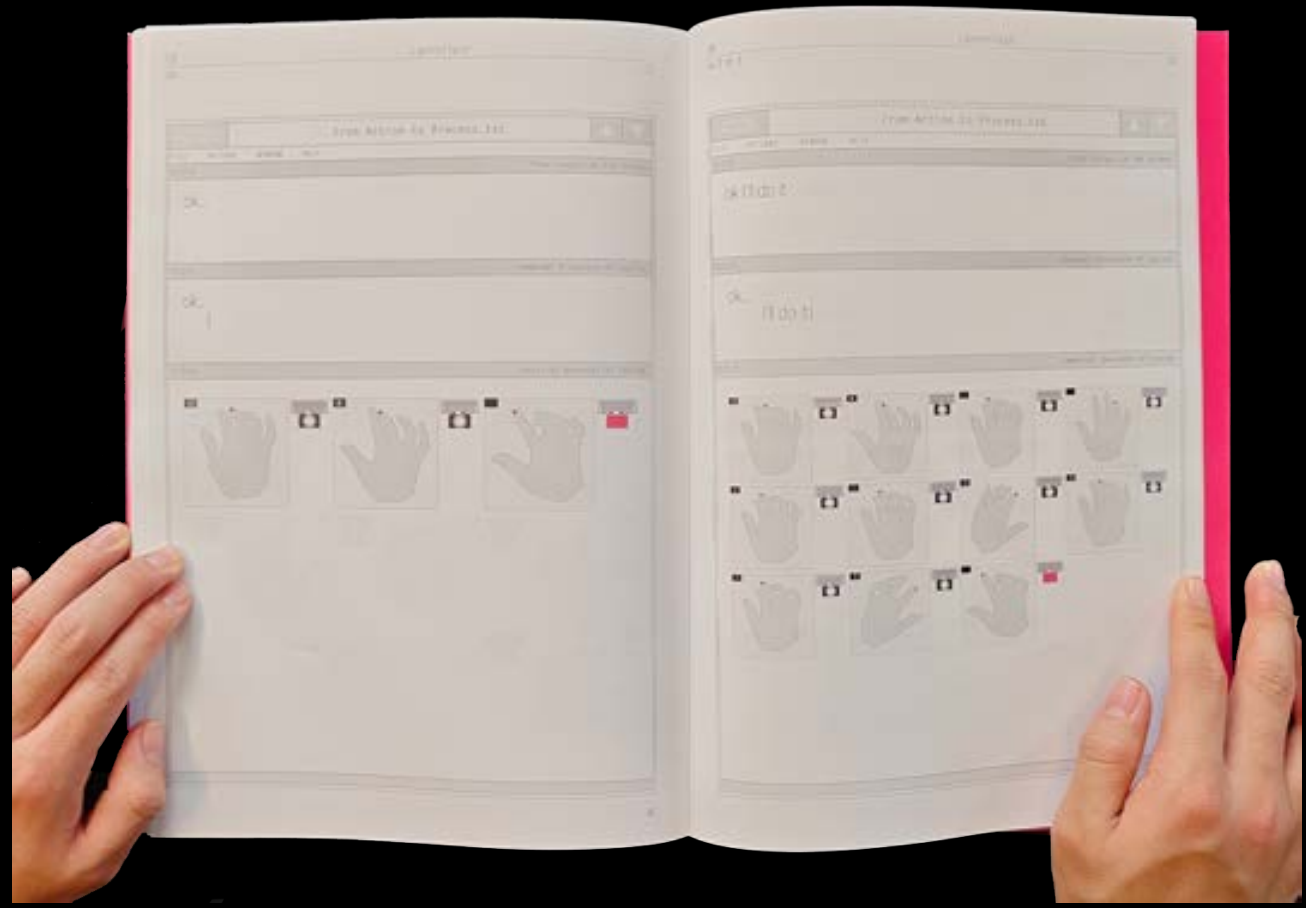
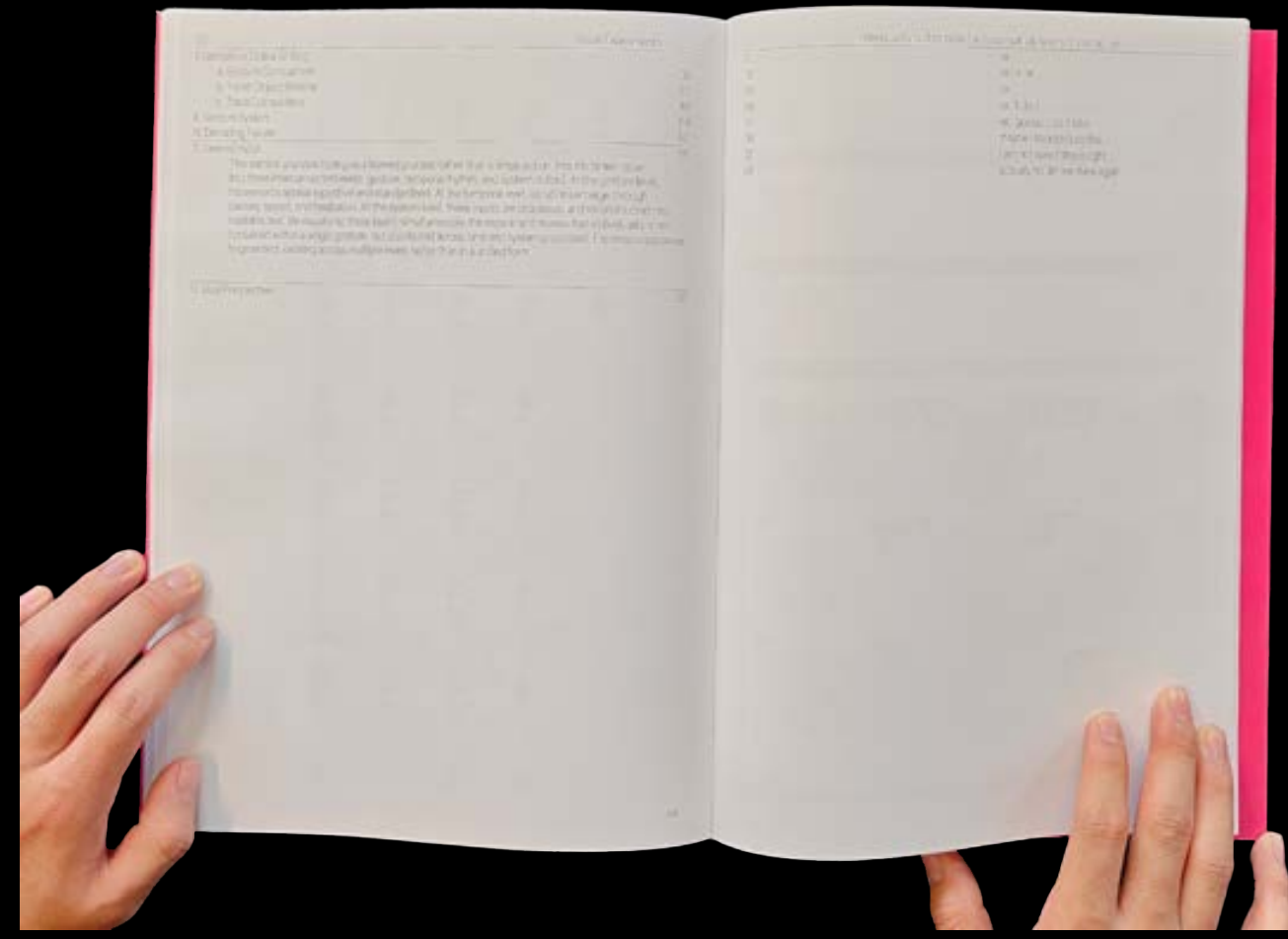
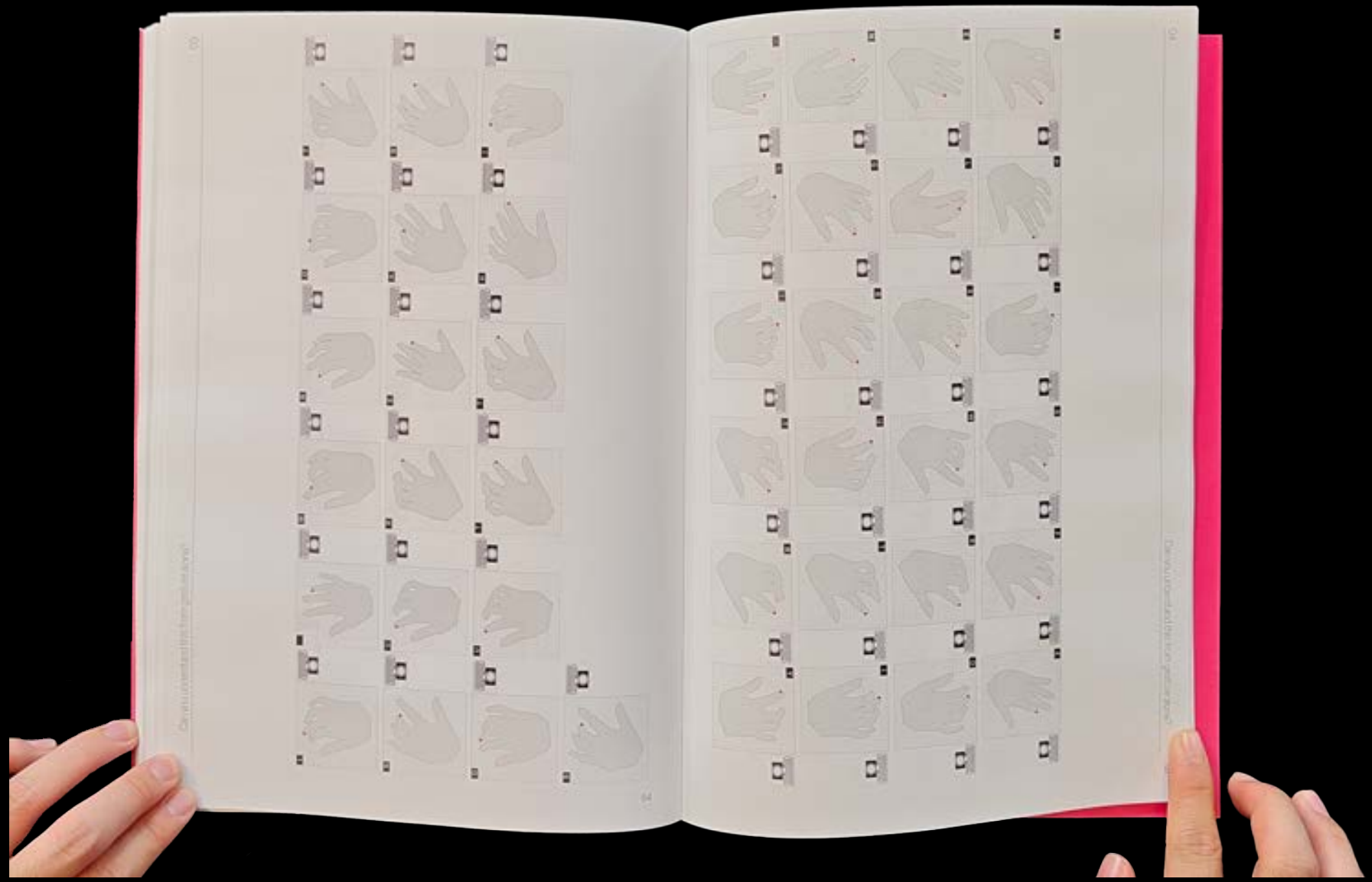
01	Text & Theory	02	Visual Experiments
The Hand as Thinking	04	I. Gesture vs Digital Writing	
Writing as Gesture	04	a. Gesture Comparison	08
Media as System	05	b. Hand-Object Relation	22
		c. Trace Comparison	48
		II. Gesture System	64
		III. Decoding Failure	80
		V. Layered Input	88
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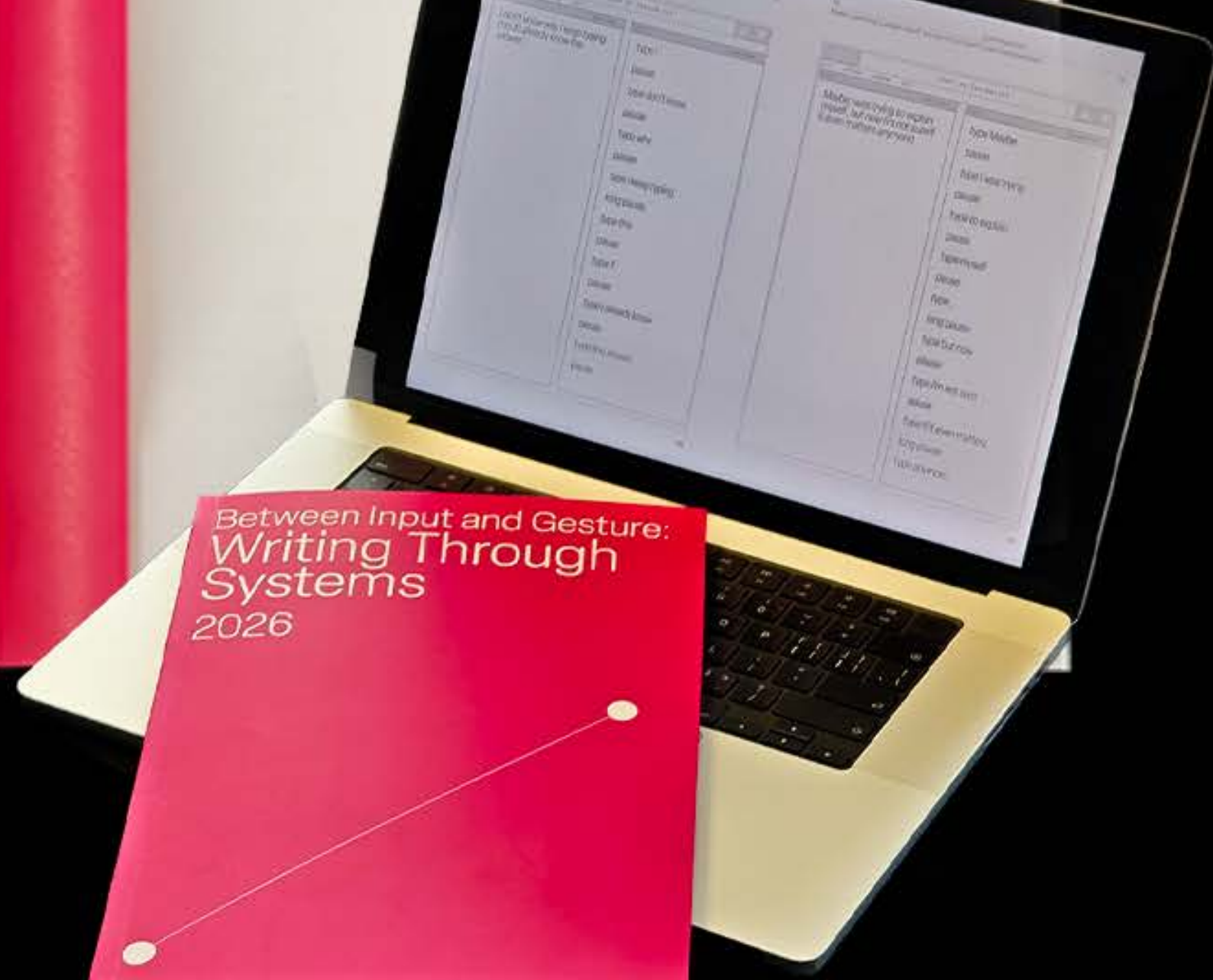
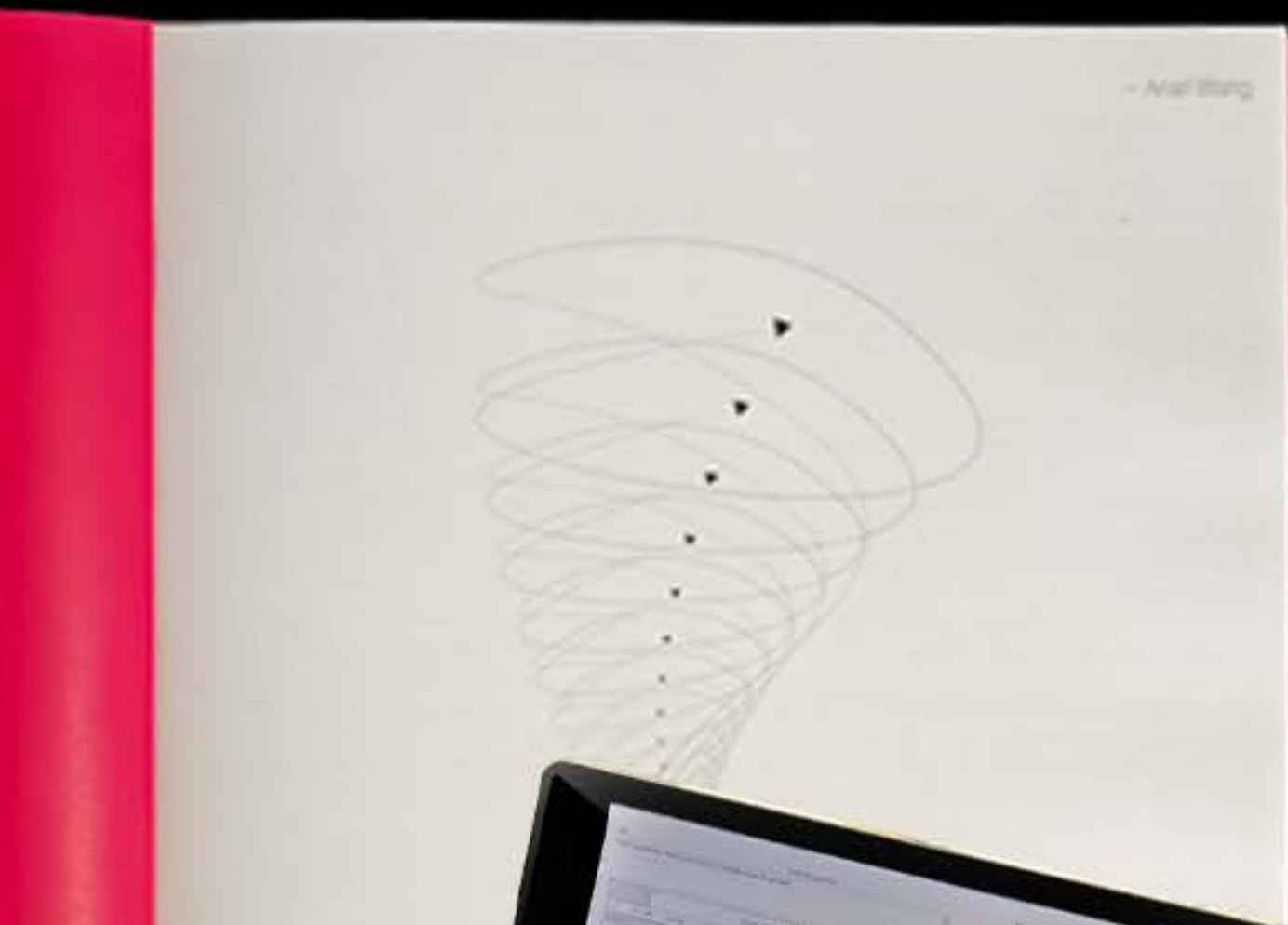
Anari Wang
2026

Between Input and Gesture: Writing Through Systems 2026



Writing was once inseparable from the physical movement of the hand. In traditional handwriting, gesture, pressure, rhythm, and hesitation were directly embedded within the mark itself, allowing individuality to become visible through the act of writing. The movement of the hand did not simply record language, but carried traces of emotion, personality, and thought. However, as writing increasingly shifts into digital systems, this relationship begins to change. The hand no longer leaves marks directly on a surface, but instead interacts with keyboards, touchscreens, and interfaces that translate movement into standardized outputs. Expression gradually moves away from the body and becomes mediated through systems, structure, and digital processes.

A keystroke appears simple and almost invisible, yet behind every keystroke exists a hidden process of pauses, swallows, decisions, uncertainty, and repetition. In digital writing, individuality is no longer immediately visible through gesture alone. Instead, it becomes fragmented across timing, editing behaviour, system interpretation, and output construction. A brief hesitation before pressing a key, an omitted word, or a prolonged pause between sentences may reveal more about a person's emotional state than the gesture itself. While typing standardises movement, it simultaneously creates new layers of expression that are embedded within process rather than appearance.



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