The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
Experimental Jetset

Januari 2021

Front cover

File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches

M→
Multiples,
Merchandise,
Memorabilia,
Multiples,
Merchandise,
Memorabilia,
Multiples,
Merchandise,
Memorabilia.

File under: multiples, merchandise,
memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches

Introduction

According to the general schedule, our proposals for the V–A–C merchandise have to be delivered in March 2021. However, since we were asked to already come up with some initial ideas in January, we put together this simple presentation.

This document contains some first ideas, rough sketches, initial drafts, early proposals, and lists of possible items. Some of these ideas are displayed visually (as images), while others are shown textually (as words). We hope this is clear.

As for the main theme of this presentation:

Instead of proposing different items to you, we are actually proposing different *series* (or *groups*, or *collections*) of items.

In the fashion industry (especially within the context of streetwear), people often talk of 'capsule collections'. We quite like this notion – the idea of a collection being a *capsule*, a tight unit, a thematically-consistent grouping of objects. So that is how we put together this presentation – as a series of 'capsule collections'.

In random order, these are the collections:

Set 1:
Poetic/diagrammatic objects
'Rational' items, turned into 'irrational' artefacts

Set 2:
From the Vaults
Art/design objects, produced within the environment of GES-2

Set 3:
Electric Blue
Merchandise referring to the blue chimneys of GES-2

Set 4:
The Archival Series
Old sketches and early proposals, turned into actual objects and tangible items

Set 5:
Other objects
Items that are yet to be classified, specified, described, and/or sketched-out

Multiples, merchandise, memorabilia

To describe these items, we do like the word 'multiples' – the term 'multiple' referring to an artwork specifically created to be multiplied and distributed.

What we like about the notion of the *multiple* is the fact that it breaks down the borders between art and design, between art and the everyday. As graphic designers, we have always been interested in movements that tried to achieve this *synthesis of art and the everyday* – from Dada to Bauhaus, from Constructivism to De Stijl. Within the ideologies of these movements, everyday objects were seen as potential platforms – platforms for aesthetic energy, for conceptual subversion, and for graphic expression.

As for the word 'merchandise' – at first sight, it's a bit of an ugly word, referring to commodification, commercialisation, reification. However, we have to admit that we have a soft spot for the word, based solely on the fact that we associate it mainly with 'band merchandise' – the t-shirts, badges and buttons that have been such a large part of our subcultural upbringing. As teenagers in the 1980s, we were completely fascinated by that era's many post-punk subcultures (two-tone, psychobilly, new wave, mod, etc.), and all these movements really shaped us. And it were post-punk artefacts (such as record sleeves, badges, buttons, patches, xeroxed fanzines, mix tapes, and t-shirts) that made us aware of graphic design in the first place. In other words – we do have a fascination for certain kinds of subcultural merchandise.

What we also like about the word 'Merch' is that it's actually closely related to Kurt Schwitters' use of the word 'Merz', and The Minutemen's notion of 'Mersh'. From *Merch* to *Merz* to *Mersh*, and back again.

Regarding the use of the word 'memorabilia': what we like about this word is that it describes one of the main functions of items sold in museum stores – its function as a *souvenir*, as a material manifestation of memory.

So there you have it:
multiple, merchandise, memorabilia.
The three words which we like to use to describe the items in this presentations.

Experimental Jetset
Amsterdam
January 2021

File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches

Set 1→ Poetic/diagrammatic objects

Poetic/diagrammatic objects

When logic and proportion
have fallen sloppy dead
– Jefferson Airplane, 'White Rabbit' (1967)

The first 'capsule collection' we'd like to discuss is the group of 'poetic/diagrammatic objects': a set of items that (at first sight) refer to 'rational' measuring instruments (rulers, compasses, clocks, etc.), but that are actually highly irrational.

These items (which should be seen as *art objects*, or souvenirs, rather than as actual measuring instruments) serve most of all to embody the spirit of V–A–C: a sense of wandering and wondering, of being happily lost and constantly searching.

The objects also encapsulate the graphic identity of V–A–C in general: the whole idea of a diagrammatic language being used in a subjective, poetic way.

For this 'capsule collection', we are thinking about abstract clocks, abstract watches, abstract rulers, abstract compasses, abstract calculators, abstract scales, etc. In the following pages, we sketched a few quick possibilities – but we can come up with many more.

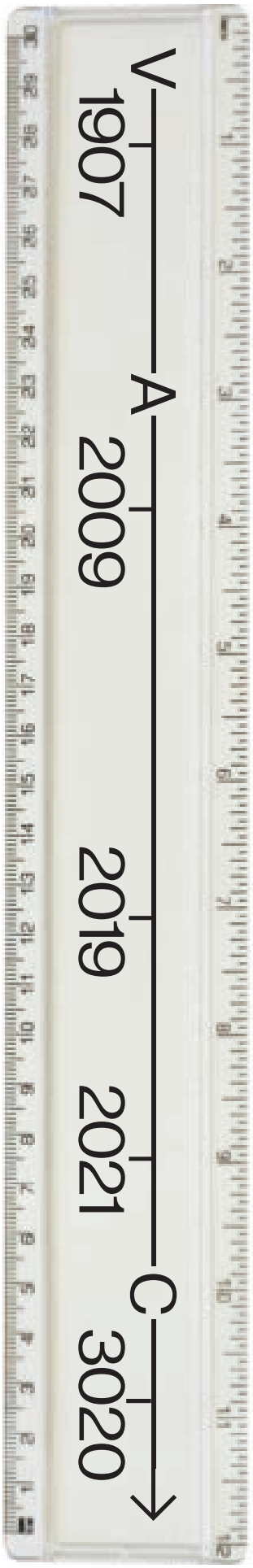
One other important item we were thinking of is an abstract map of Moscow – an art print (folded as a city map) that depicts an diagrammatic (and abstracted) representation of Moscow, indicating the location of GES-2 within the city.

The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
Experimental Jetset

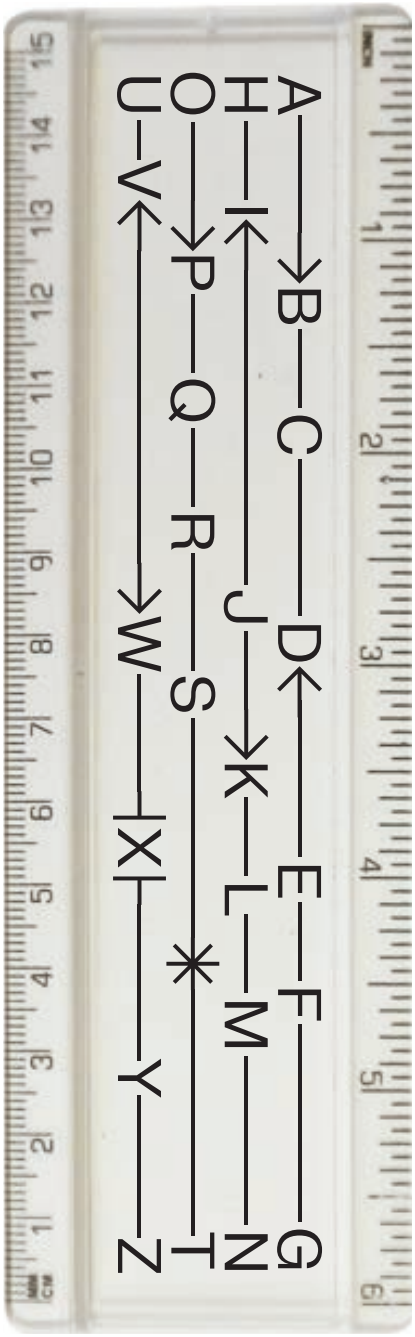
Januari 2021

Poetic/diagrammatic objects
Abstract ruler
Abstract compass
Abstract dice
Abstract watch
Abstract clock
Abstract pendulum
Abstract scales
Abstract city map
Abstract calculator
Abstract set square
Etc. etc.

File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs



Subjective rulers:



Dérive compass:



Wayfinding dice:



The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
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Poetic/diagrammatic objects
Abstract watches

File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches

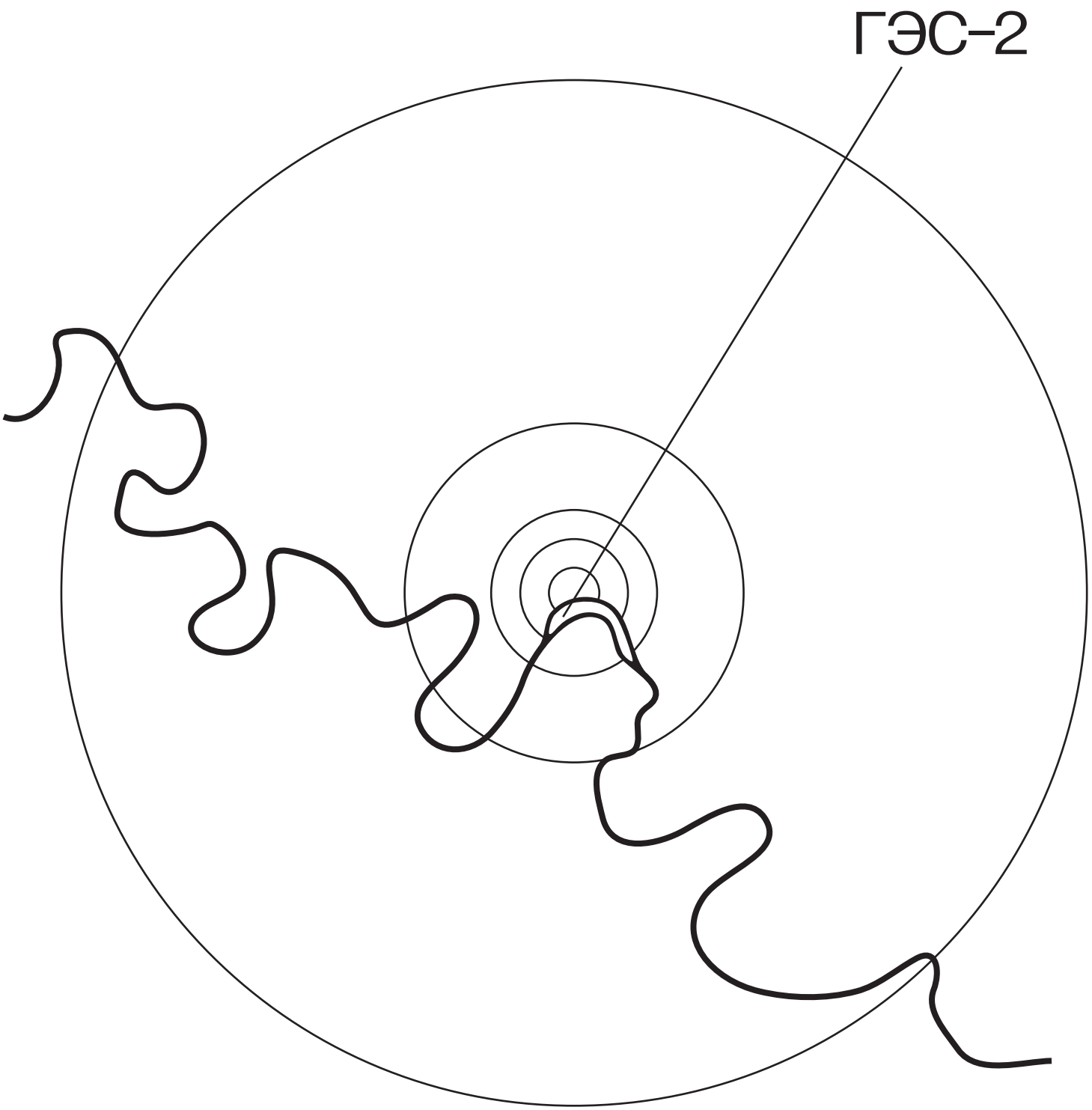
Abstract watches – image from May 2018










ГЭС-2

The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
Experimental Jetset

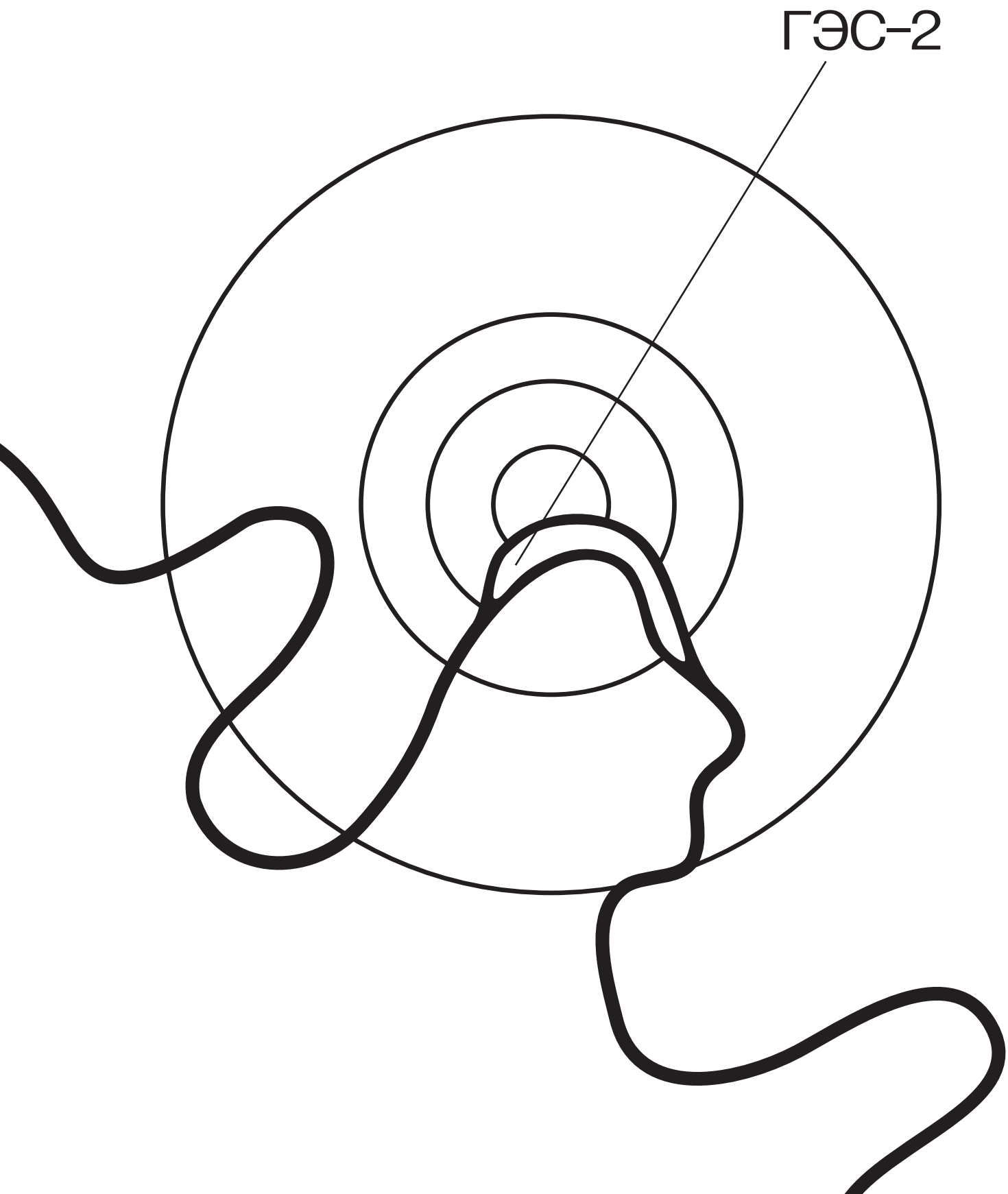
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Poetic/diagrammatic objects
Abstract map of Moscow

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File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches



The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
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Poetic/diagrammatic objects
Abstract clock

Page 8

File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches

Here's a screenprinted multiple we created in 2017 for After 8 Books (Paris), in an edition of 30. Meant to function as a kinetic poem, the piece is basically a low-tech clock, consisting of rotating cardboard circles (together spelling out the phrase "Automatic Future"), put on top of a battery-operated clockwork. We could create a similar abstract clock to be sold in the GES-2 museum store.



File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches

Set 2→ From the Vaults...

From the Vaults

For the second ‘capsule collection’, we thought it would be interesting to look into items produced *on site*, in the workshops of The Vaults themselves.

So we were thinking about ceramics (pots, vases, plates, figurines, etc.) produced in the Ceramics workshop, textiles and garments produced in the Textiles workshop, small wooden sculptures and toys produced in the Wood workshop, etc. etc.

On the following few pages, we show just a couple of possible examples.

Among others, we propose a ceramics collection based on laboratory utensils (cups, tubes, etc.), printed with diagrammatic V–A–C measurements.

We can also imagine a heavy denim/cotton/twill fabric being produced in the Textiles workshop, printed with a diagrammatic pattern.

This fabric can then be used for the production of many items – from laboratory aprons to vegan shoes, etc.

In this presentation, we included examples of exactly these two items: aprons and shoes.

——

This collection clearly emphasises the notion of GES-2 as a *factory* – as a place where culture is being manufactured, assembled, and distributed.

In that sense, this particular collection somewhat refers to the ideas of ‘Productivism’ – the Constructivist movement (established around 1925, in post-revolutionary Russia) that tried to break down the borders between art and design, and sought to ensure that aesthetic labor should have a main role, as an essential element of industrial production.

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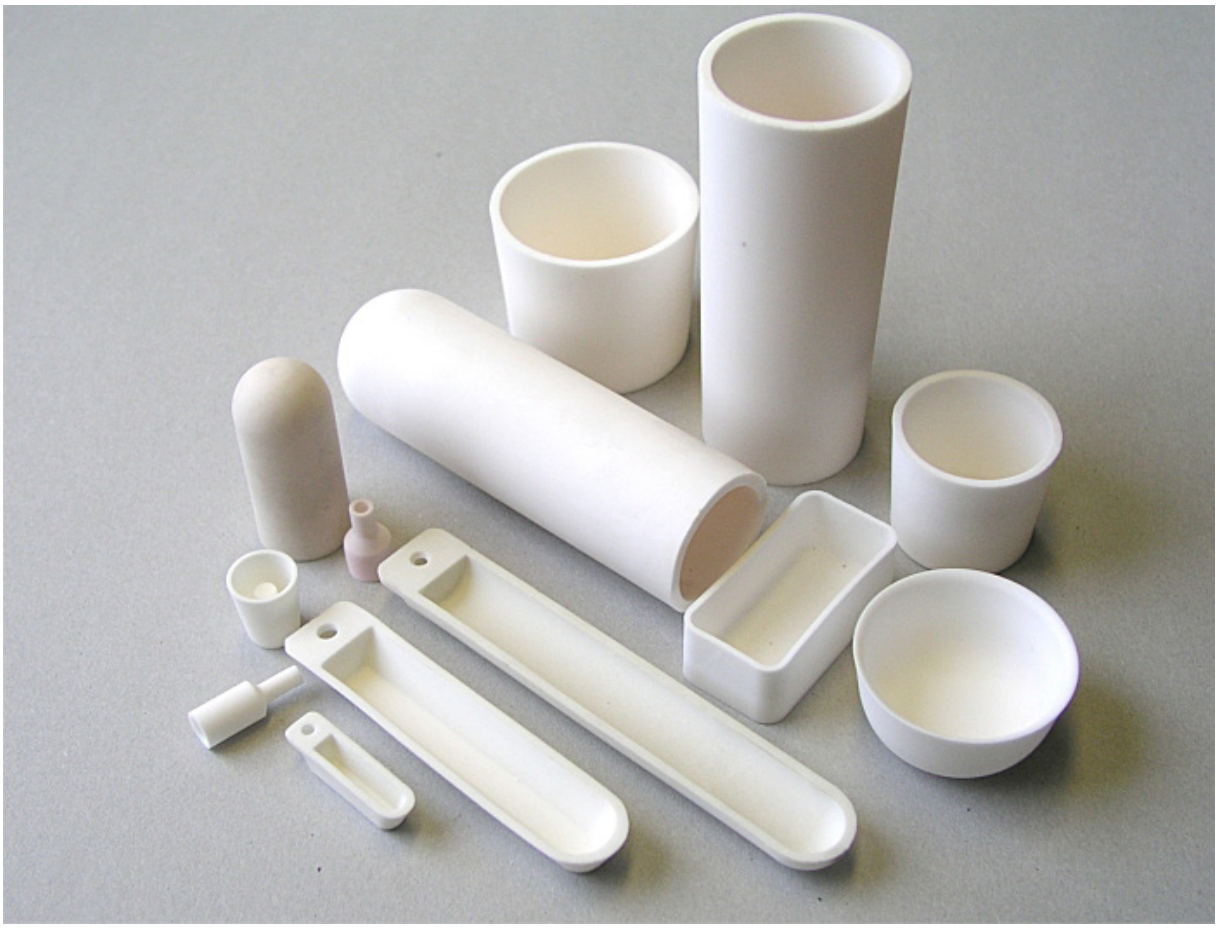
From the Vaults
Laboratory ceramics

Page 10

File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches





The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
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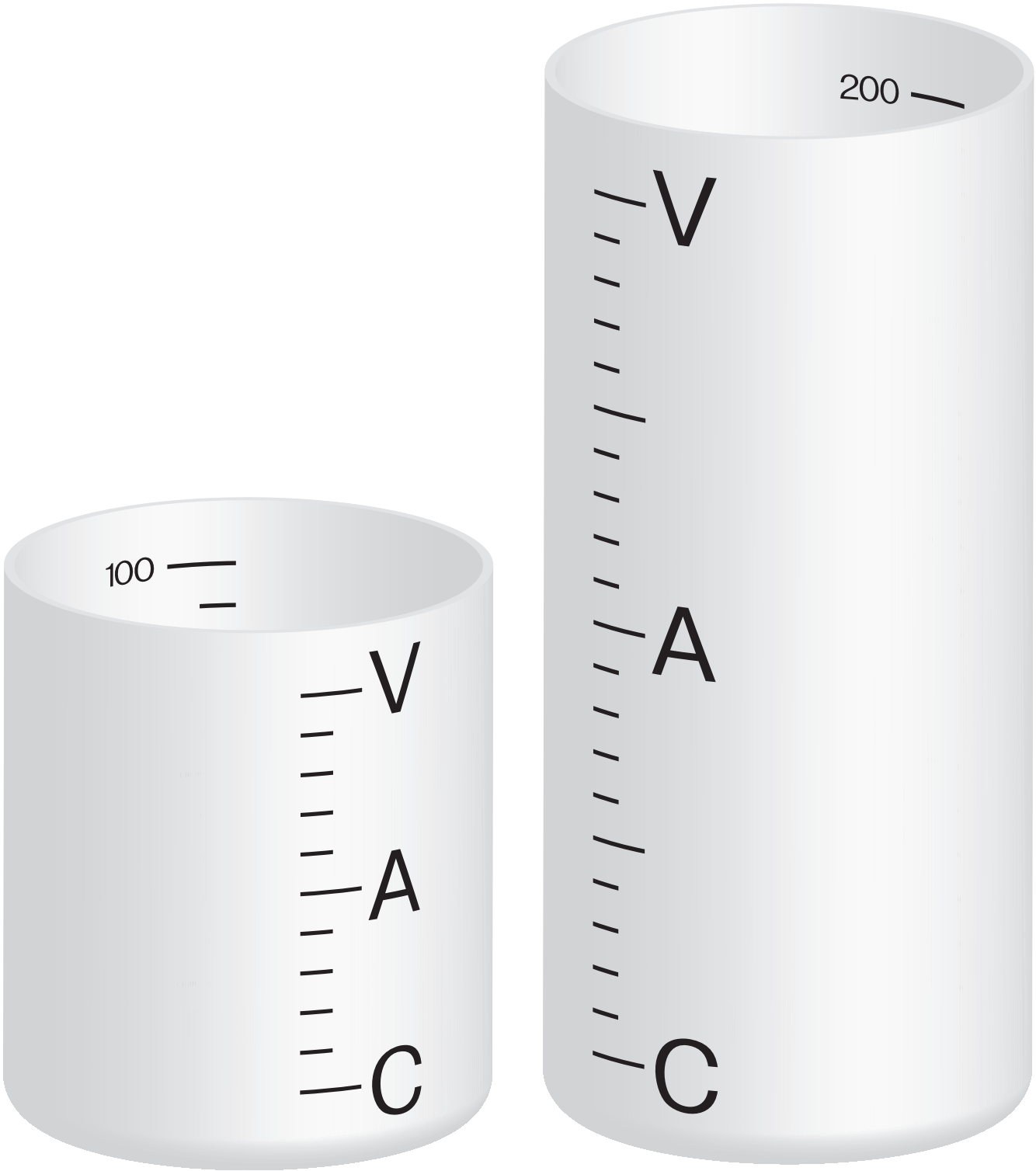
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From the Vaults
Laboratory ceramics

Page 11

File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches



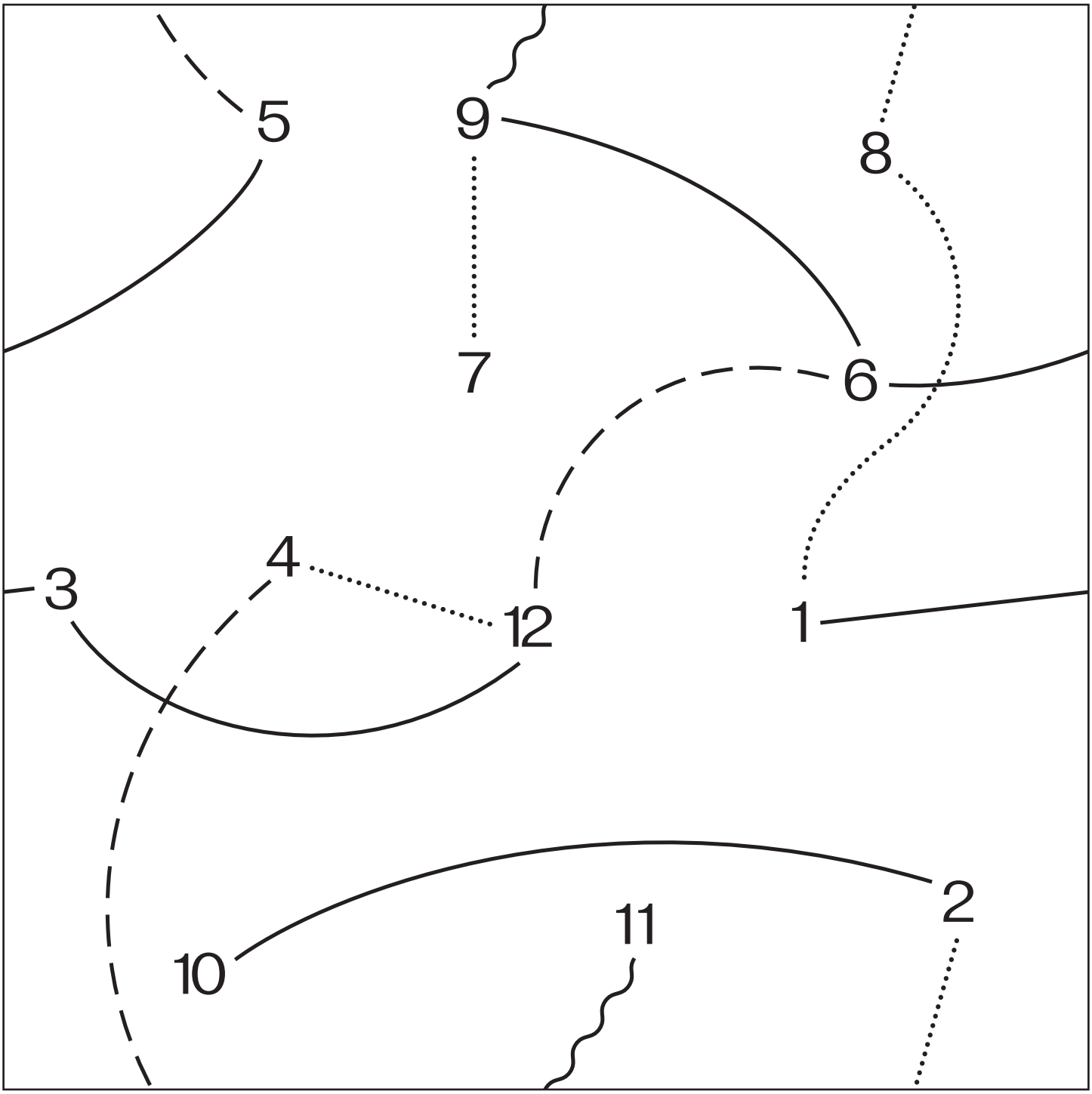
The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
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From the Vaults
Fabric pattern

File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches



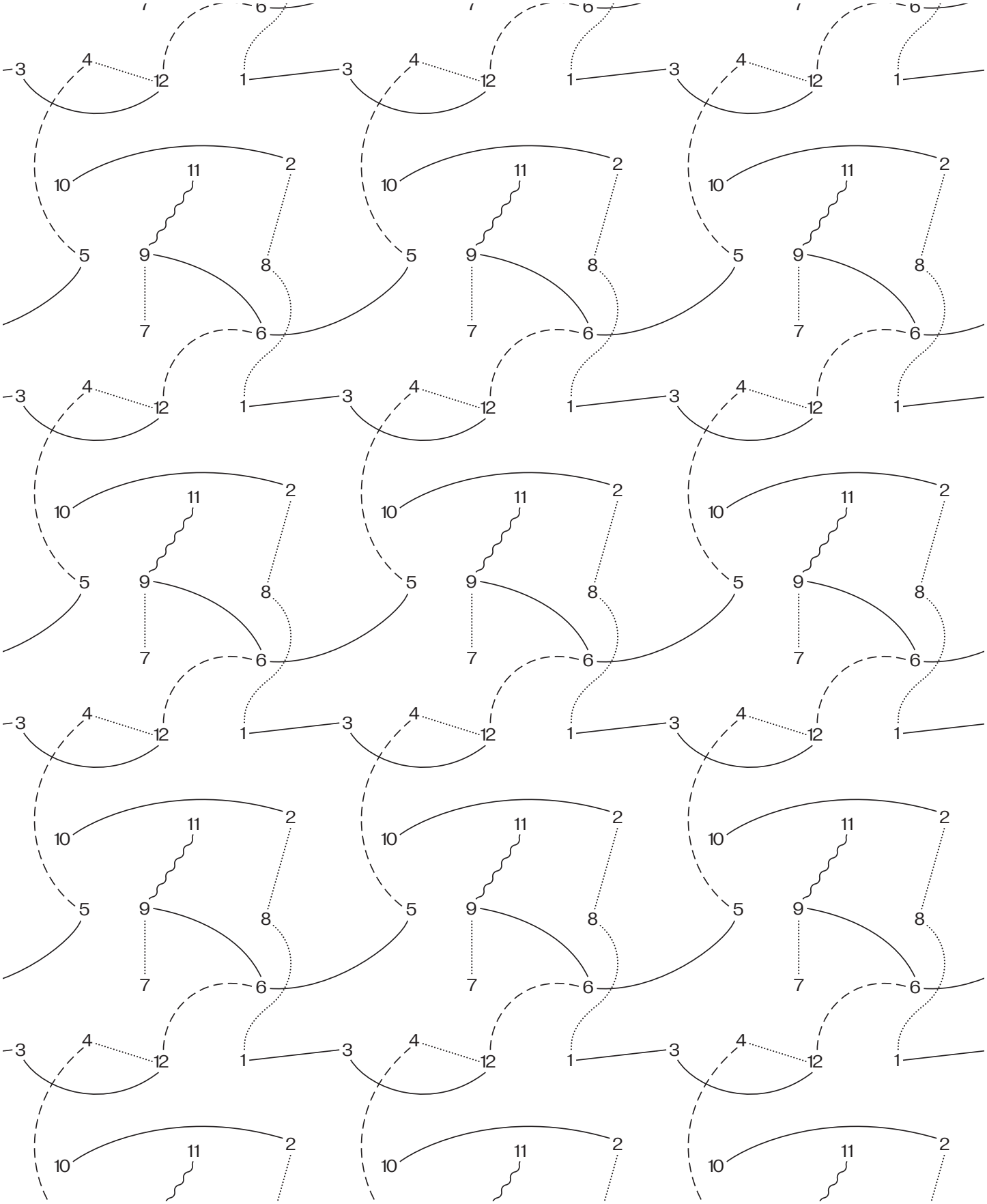
The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
Experimental Jetset

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From the Vaults
Fabric pattern

File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches



The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
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From the Vaults
Patterned apron

Page 14

File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches



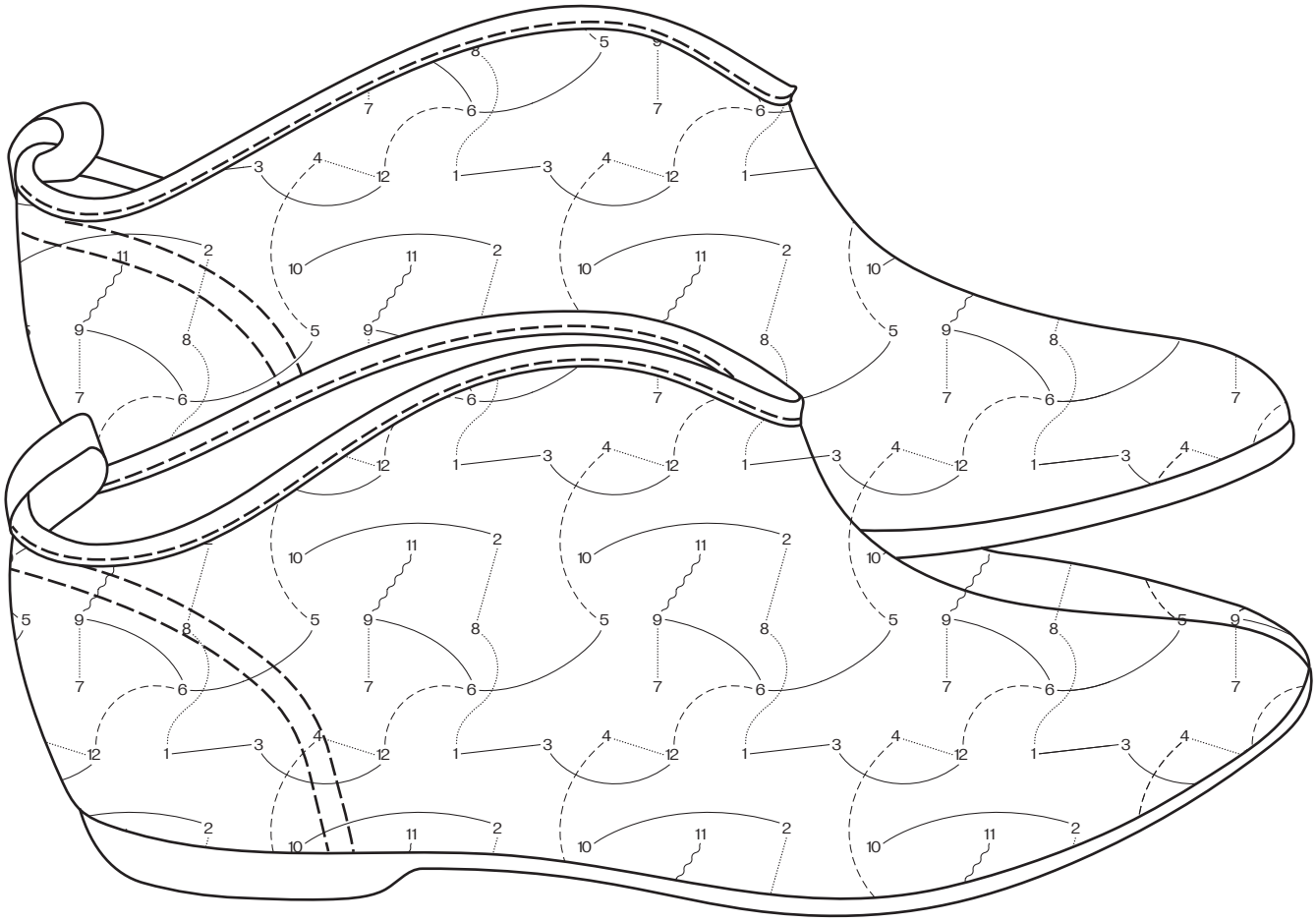
The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
Experimental Jetset

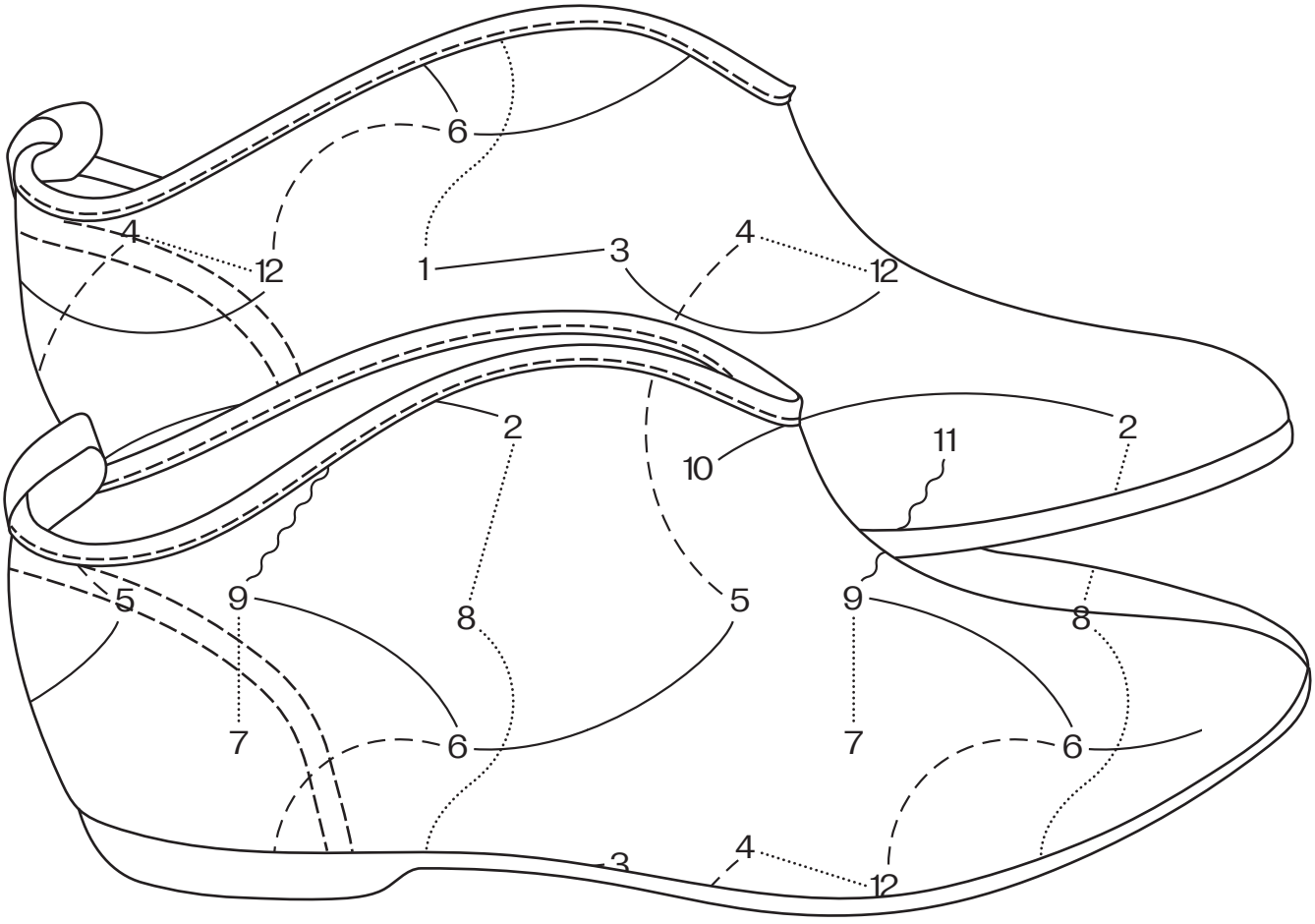
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From the Vaults
Patterned high top sneakers

File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches





The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
Experimental Jetset

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From the Vaults
Bread wrapping paper

Page 16

File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches

Here's an old sketch (from a presentation we made around July 2018) for *bread wrapping paper*, to be used in the bakery of The Vaults (at that time still being referred to as 'цех').









File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches

Set 3→ Electric Blue

Electricity

Somewhere in the fall of 2019, we were asked (by the staff of V–A–C) if we could come up with a t-shirt referring to the blue chimneys of the GES-2 building. We made a couple of PDF presentations (dated September 2019), and delivered them to V–A–C – but nothing ever happened to it.

And so it just lost momentum, and we never thought of it again.

However – just a couple of weeks ago (towards the end of 2020), Roman Gornitsky (the designer of *Diagramatika*, the official typeface of V–A–C) released a brand-new typeface, named *Gramatika Shifted* – basically an 'electric' version of *Diagramatika*. Looking at this typeface, we thought this would work perfectly on a t-shirt referring to the chimneys of GES-2. The typeface (with its glitched, shifted appearance) really radiates electricity (while still being closely linked to *Diagramatika*, and the graphic language of V–A–C).

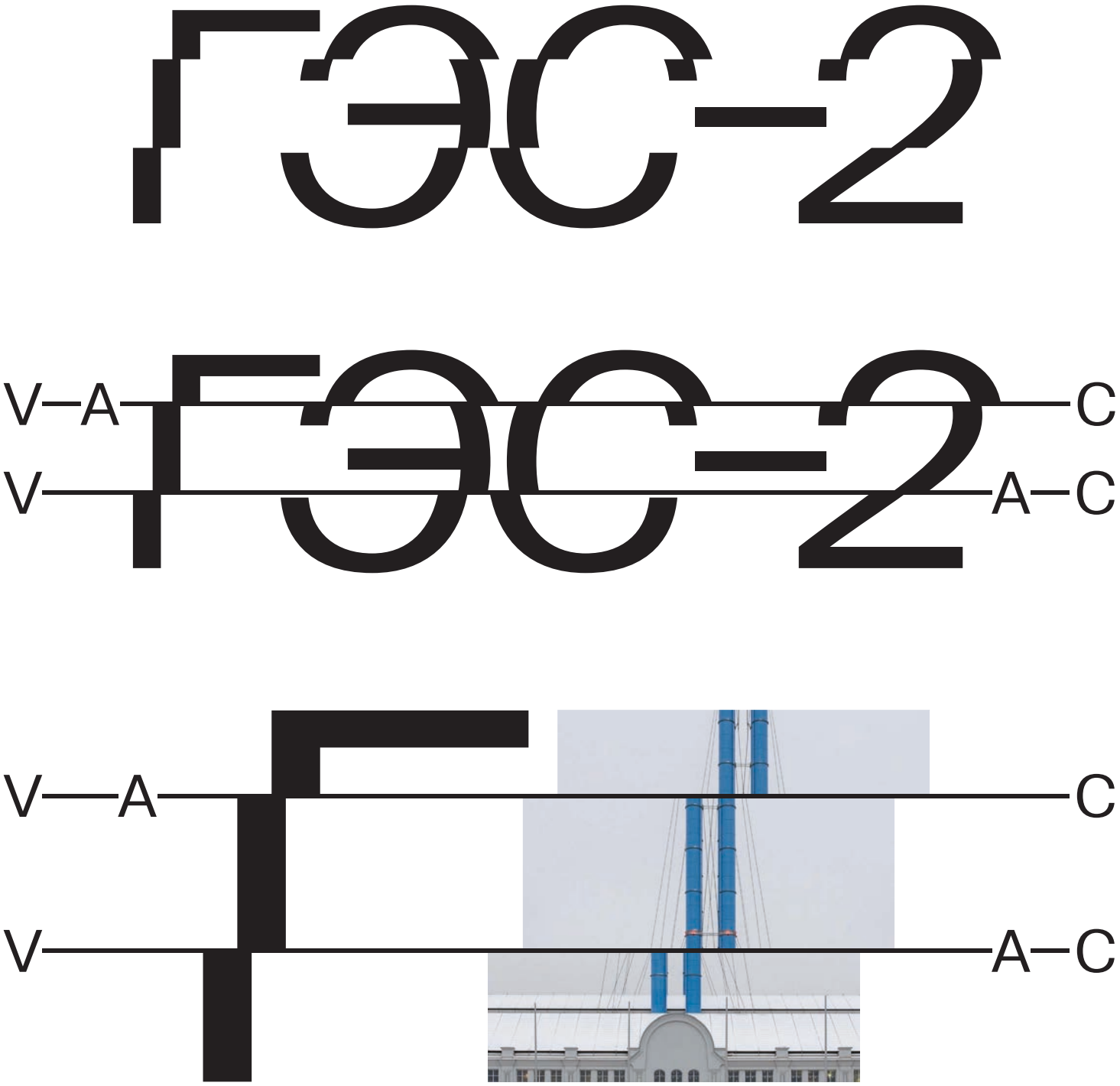
So that's why we tried our hand at a longsleeve shirt, expressing the electric power of the chimneys through the glitchy energy of *Gramatika Shifted*.

Also included in this mini-chapter are some sketches for kites.

For some reason, we feel that kites and electricity are closely connected (perhaps through the figure of Benjamin Franklin, and his iconic experiments involving kites and lightning).

On top of that, the idea of a typographic kite also seems tightly related to the zeppelin-driven banners of Liubov Popova (in her excellent 'Sketch for the Mass Action at Khodynka Field', from 1921 – a drawing that has been a big inspiration for us, throughout our time at V–A–C).

In short – electricity, chimneys, and kites.
It's all up in the air.


V–A
C
V
A–C
V—A
C
V
A–C

The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
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Electric Blue
Longsleeve shirt

File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

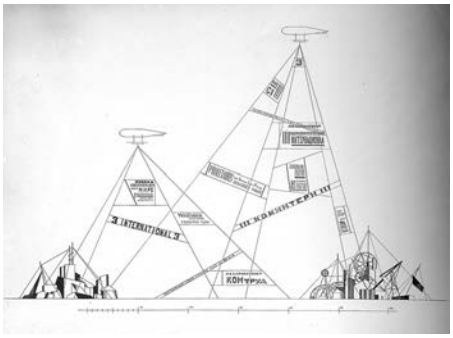
First ideas, rough sketches



The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
Experimental Jetset

Januari 2021

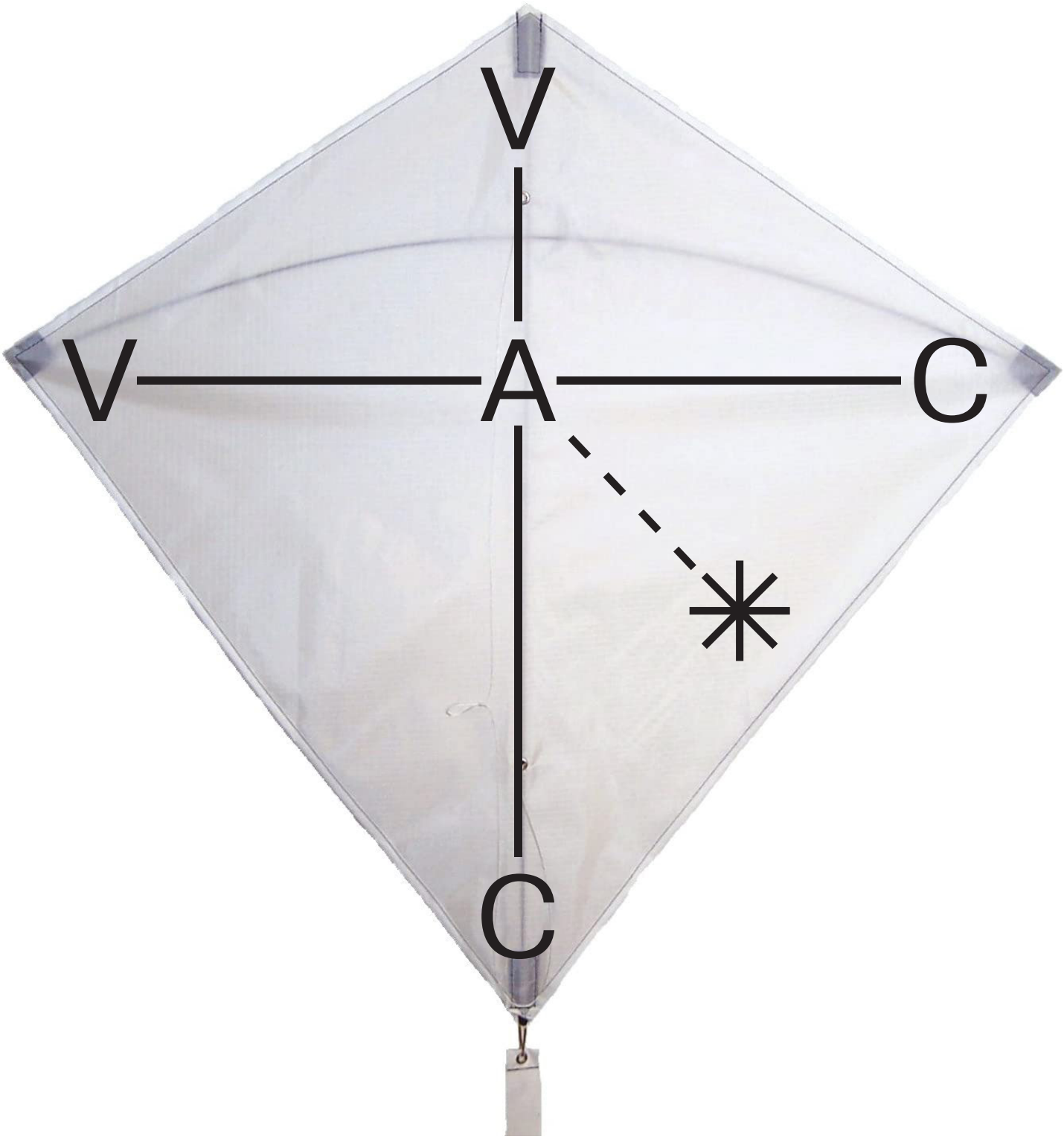
Electric Blue
Standard kite



Liubov Popova, 1921



Benjamin Franklin, 1752



The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
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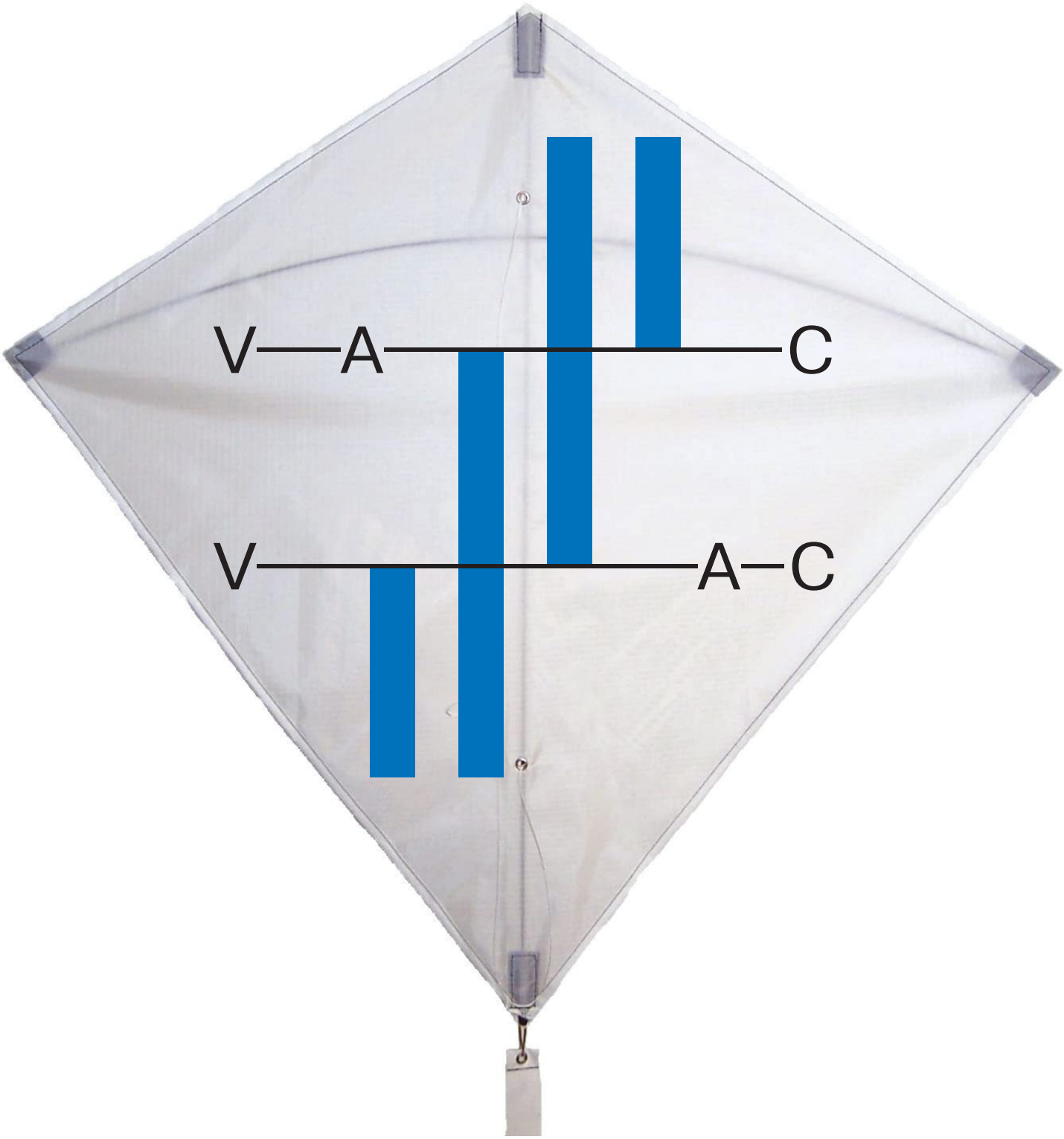
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Electric Blue
Chimney kite

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File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches



The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
Experimental Jetset

Januari 2021

Electric Blue
Early proposals (September 2019)
– *Rejected*

After: Hans Hillman
Panzerkreuzer Potemkin
[Battleship Potemkin]
1966











File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches

Set 4→ The Archival Series

The Archival Series

Browsing through some of our early presentations (especially the presentations we prepared between July 2017 and July 2019), we came across many sketches, drawings and diagrams that would work really well as prints on t-shirts, sweaters and tote-bags – to function as some sort of 'archival collection'.

So we can imagine that we will go through these old presentations, one by one – and make a good selection of old sketches. These sketches can then be screenprinted onto standard merchandise items: t-shirts, longsleeve shirts, sweaters, jackets, badges, patches, post cards, fridge magnets, key rings – perhaps even a skateboard?

We realize that these items are (in themselves) not very interesting and imaginative – they are just basic gear. But, within the context of this particular collection, these items should be seen more as blank canvasses, to display the archival sketches.

We can imagine that these prints will be accompanied by a caption, or mark, or stamp, or code, or seal, that explains the archival background of the prints.

In other words – underneath each print, we can put a mark that says "From the archive of V–A–C x Experimental Jetset / Dated May 2018" or something like that.



We haven't included these marks yet in the sketches on the following pages – but we are certain that you can easily imagine what it will look like.

The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
Experimental Jetset

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The Archival Series
T-shirt

(The diagram screenprinted on the shirt is based on a sketch from May 2018)

All the words within the diagram spell out the acronym V–A–C:

File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs



The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
Experimental Jetset

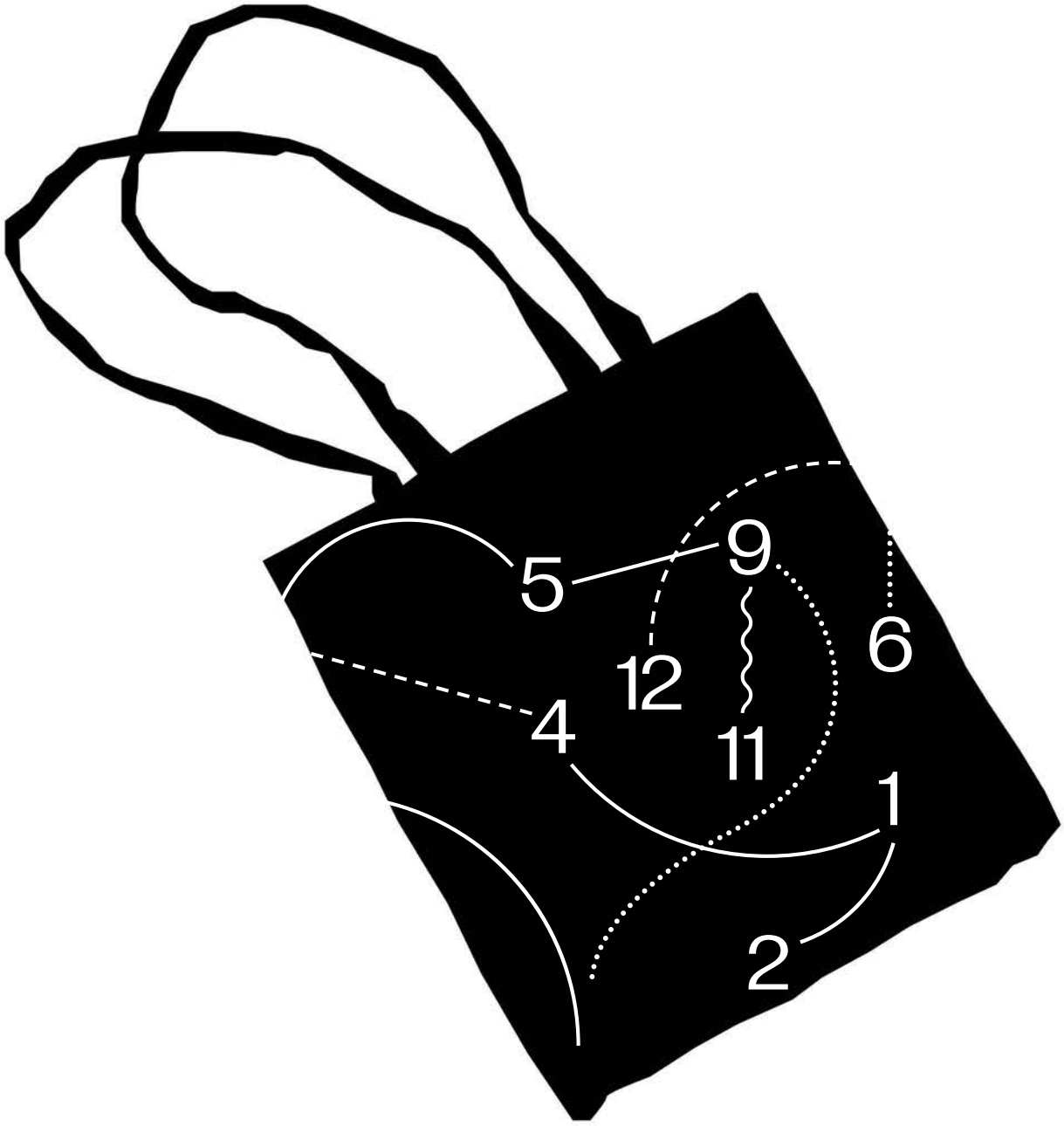
Januari 2021

The Archival Series
Tote bag

(The pattern screenprinted on the bag
is based on a sketch from May 2018)

File under: multiples, merchandise,
memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches



The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
Experimental Jetset

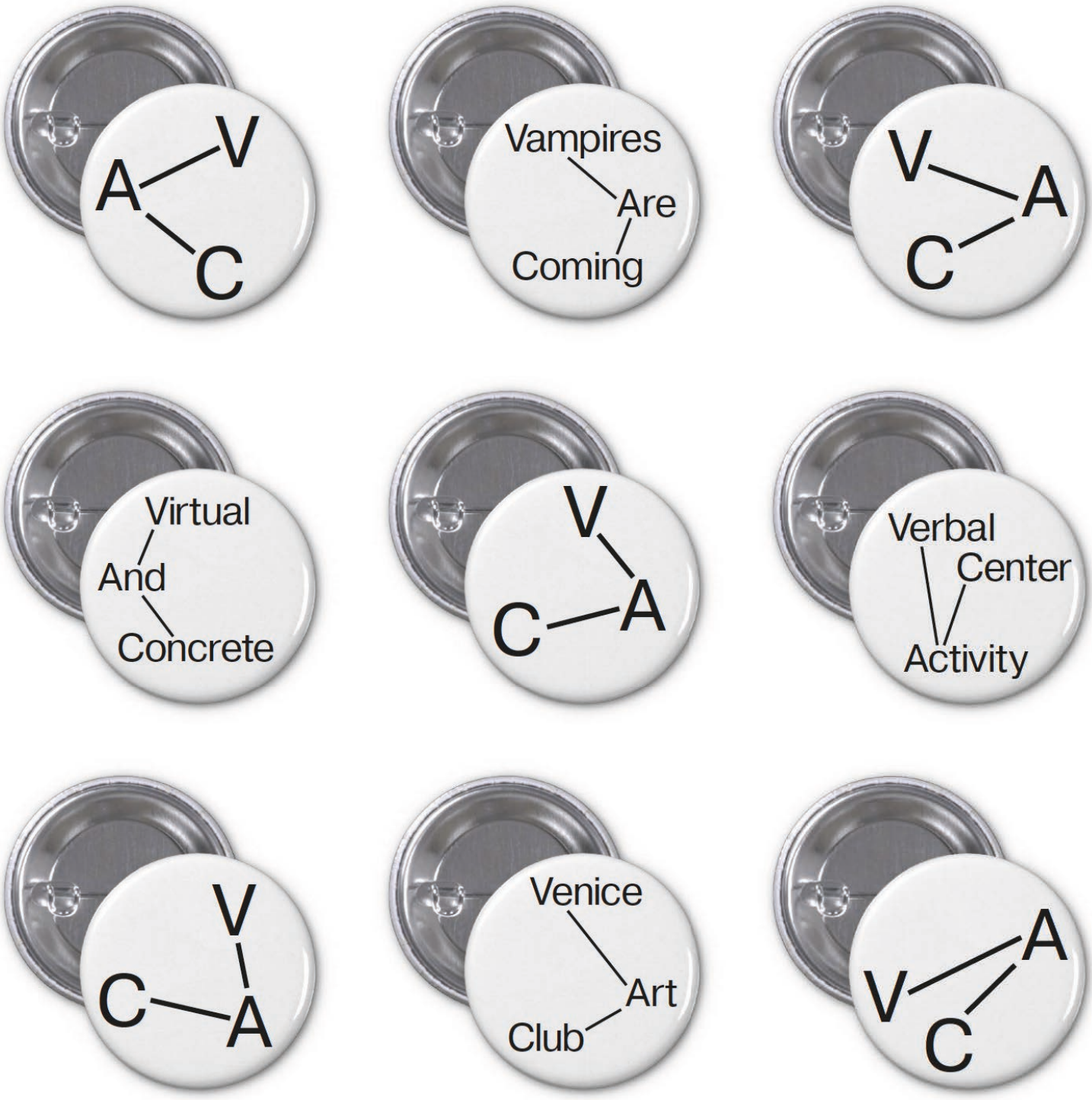
Januari 2021

The Archival Series
Buttons/badges/pins

Early proposals
Acronym buttons (May 2018)

File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches



The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
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The Archival Series
Crewneck sweatshirts

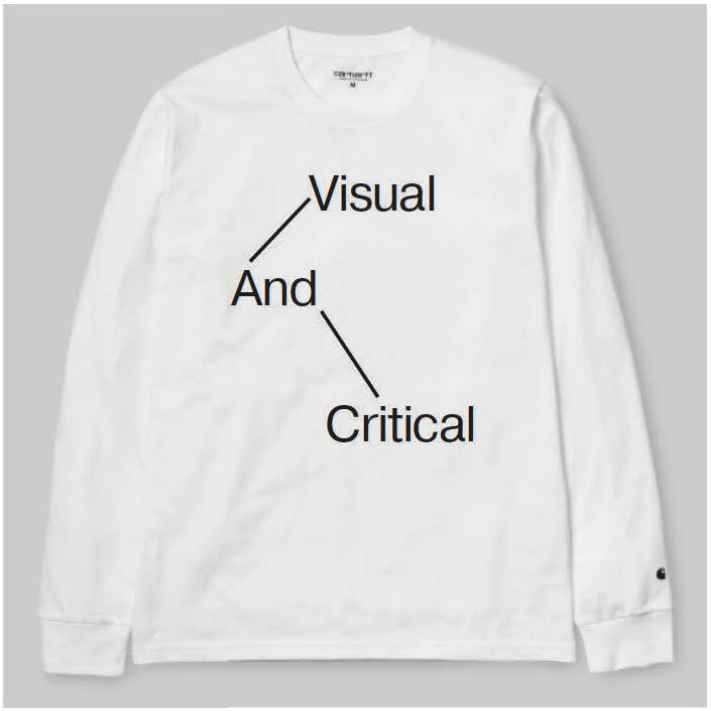
Early proposals
Acronym sweaters (May 2018)

Page 27

File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches









The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
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The Archival Series
Tote bags

Early proposals
Acronym bags (May 2018)

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File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches









The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
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The Archival Series
Oversized shirt

Early proposal
Compass shirt (May 2018)

File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches



The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
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Januari 2021

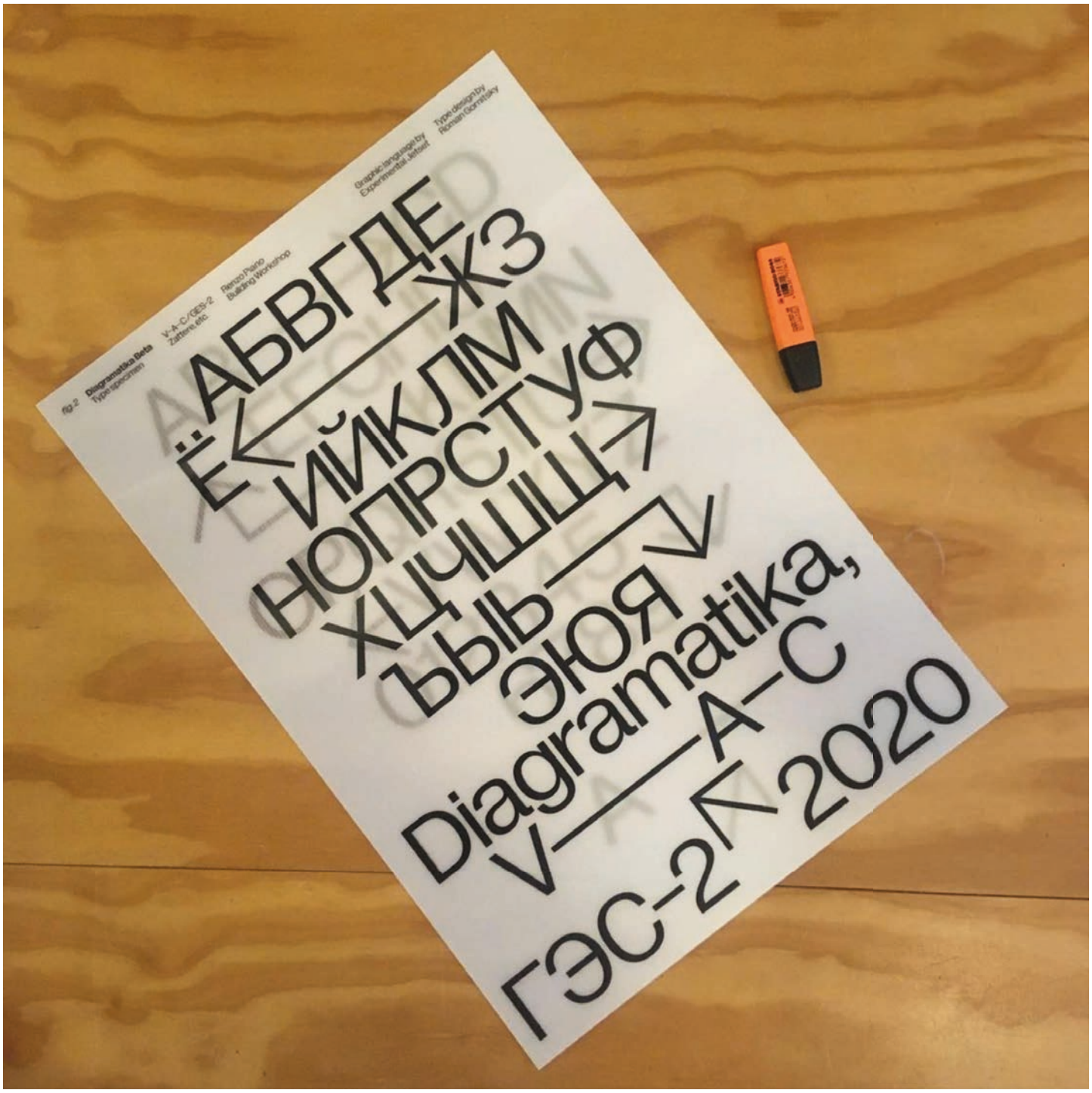
The Archival Series
Lenticular type specimen

In January 2020, we produced this A2-sized lenticular print – a kinetic type-specimen, showing the full alphabet of Diagramatika (the typeface that was created specifically for V–A–C and GES-2).

We used this lenticular poster originally for internal reasons – mainly to show the typeface to the staff of V–A–C.

However, we think that such a lenticular/kinetic poster would be an interesting item to be reproduced and sold – as a limited edition art print.





File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches

Set 5→ Other objects

Other objects

In this final chapter, we wanted to discuss (in text rather than in image) all kinds of other items we had in mind.

For example – we really like the idea of creating a *stationery set* for V–A–C: a set of envelopes, letterheads, pens, pencils, notebooks, folders, USB-sticks, name-tags, stickers, etc., that can be bought in the museum store.

When it comes to the subject of notebooks, we are also thinking about the notebook (and accompanying pencil) that we created for the 'Discovering GES-2' conference, in October 2019. We think that this notebook (printed by Falafel Books) could easily be reworked into a notebook for the museum store.

Within the context of 'Discovering GES-2', another item that we really liked was the *avoska bag* – this could be a potential item for the museum store as well.

We were also thinking about an umbrella:

We recently created an umbrella for the Tokyo Art Book Fair (a simple white umbrella, printed with the slogan 'To Kyo or not To Kyo'), and it worked really well. So we could create a similar item for V–A–C.

(Thinking about the theme of rain, we can also think about ponchos, rain coats, parkas – these would be great items of merchandise as well).

Lastly, we are also thinking about a set of high quality, screenprinted posters, that could be bought (as framed art prints, perhaps even signed) in the museum store of V–A–C. We could start working on such a set of art prints very soon.

Anyway – this PDF is just a beginning.
We'll continue thinking of possible items, and we'll keep you updated. But we do hope that this document will already give you a rough idea of what we have in mind, souvenir-wise.

The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
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Januari 2021

Other objects

As we already wrote – we really like the idea of creating a *stationery set* for V–A–C: a set of envelopes, letterheads, pens, pencils, notebooks, folders, USB-sticks, name-tags, stickers, etc., that can be bought in the museum store.

When it comes to the subject of notebooks, we are also thinking about the notebook (and accompanying pencil) that we created for the 'Discovering GES-2' conference, in October 2019 (see the picture below). We think that such a notebook could easily be reworked into a notebook for the museum store.

File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches

Within the context of 'Discovering GES-2', another item that we really liked was the *avoska bag* – this could be a potential item for the museum store as well.



Other objects

As discussed earlier: we were also thinking about an umbrella.

Last year, we created an umbrella for the Tokyo Art Book Fair (an umbrella carrying the slogan‘To Kyo or not To Kyo’ – see the picture below), and it worked really well. So we could create a similar item for V–A–C.

File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches

Thinking about the theme of rain, we could also think about ponchos, rain coats, parkas – these would be great items of merchandise as well.



The diagrammetic language of V–A–C
Experimental Jetset

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Back cover

File under: multiples, merchandise, memorabilia, paraphenalia, souvenirs

First ideas, rough sketches

M←
Memorabilia,
Multiples,
Merchandise,
Memorabilia,
Multiples,
Merchandise,
Memorabilia,
Multiples,
Merchandise.