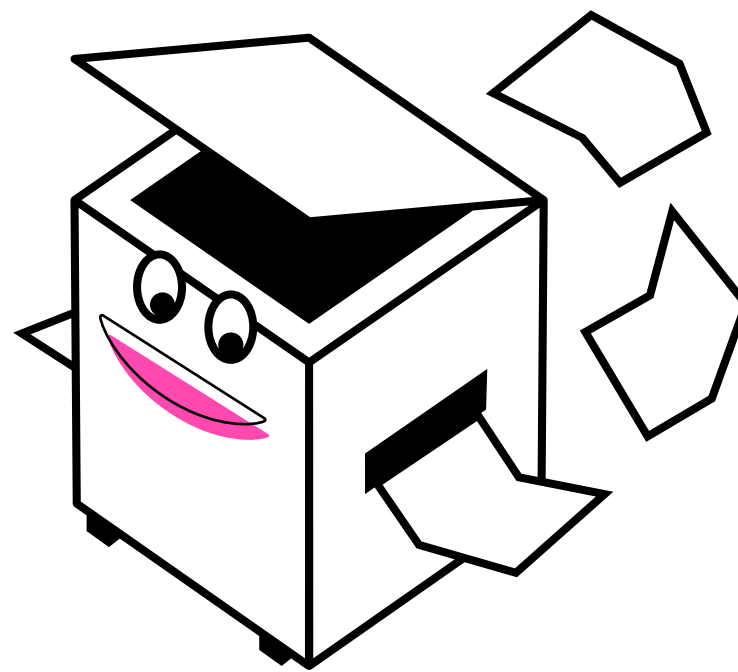
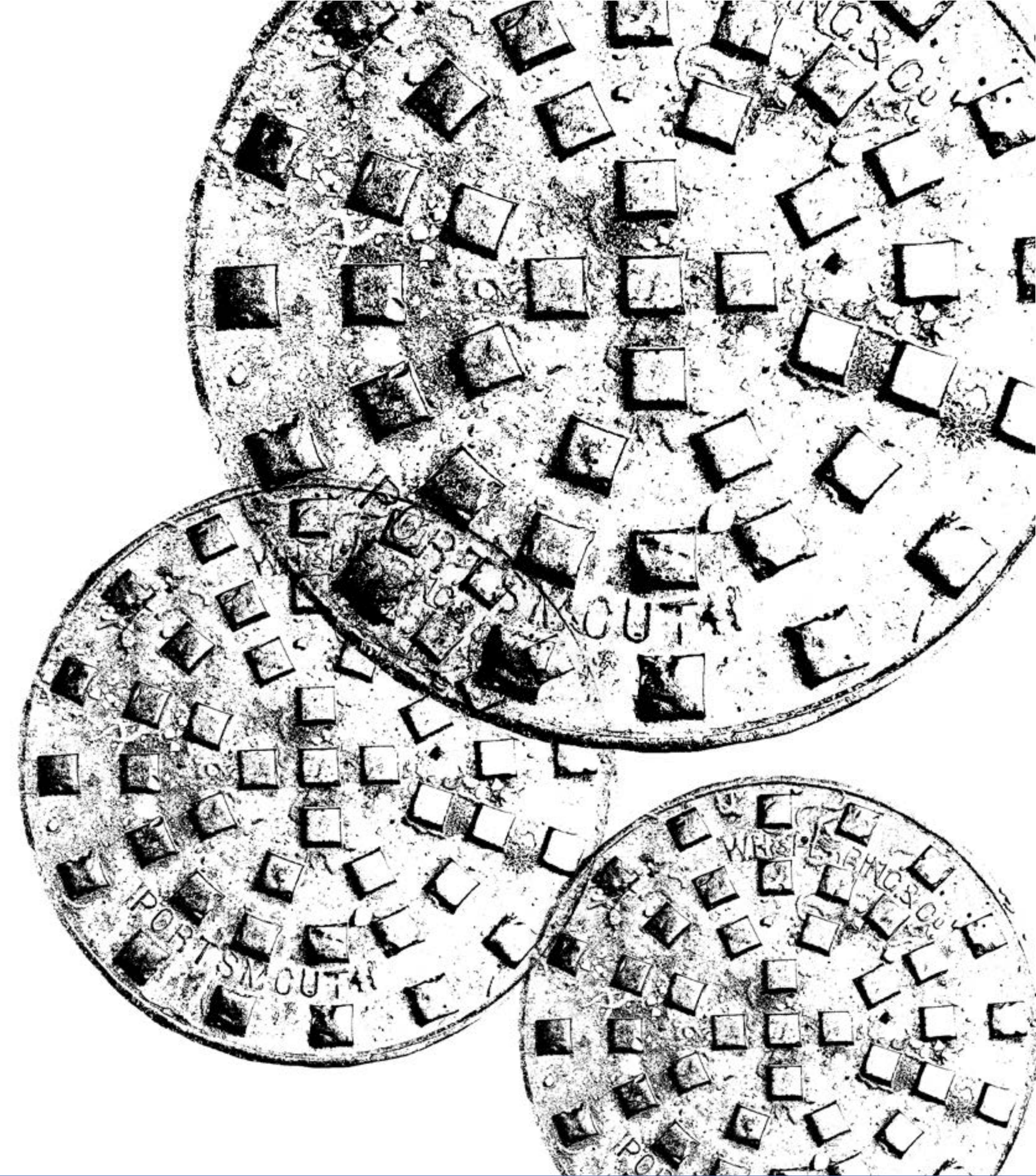


RISO

BOX



Notebook Series inspired by the overlooked artworks of manhole, drain and utility covers we frequently tread.



BRIEF

Create a concept for a product or service associated with your new business proposition. You might think of it as a mock-up example of what your new business will make or provide.

One of the products I wish to produce for the Riso Box's shop and for market are a series of notebooks, as stated in my individual report [\[1\]](#). Eventually, I'll produce a number of different designs and series with differing themes to give consumers a variety of choice.

While studying on GDE720 we were asked to explore letterforms in the environment and I noticed the lettering on manhole, utility and drain covers [\[2\]](#). Since then I have been drawn to the patterns that adorn these mostly overlooked fixtures under our feet and have collected a bank of photographs.

These repeat patterns will form my inspiration for this first design series.

Photograph: Ellie Cross [\[2\]](#)



MANHOLE, DRAIN & UTILITY COVERS

Manhole, drain and utility covers found while travelling around my local area by foot. They would make for some great rubbings and the added textures created by the years of wear would lend itself beautifully to risograph.



PATTERN & FORM STUDY

Narrowing down the covers of interest and isolating their forms from the photographs using Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator.



OVERLOOKED

While exploring my Instagram library and then inevitably scrolling, a post from Pentagram Design caught my eye celebrating Marina Willer's new kickstarter campaign for her series 'Overlooked' [\[3\]](#).



That sinking feeling washed over me when you see someone has done what you have started to embark upon. Exactly what I had envisaged with bright spot colours, perfect for risograph.

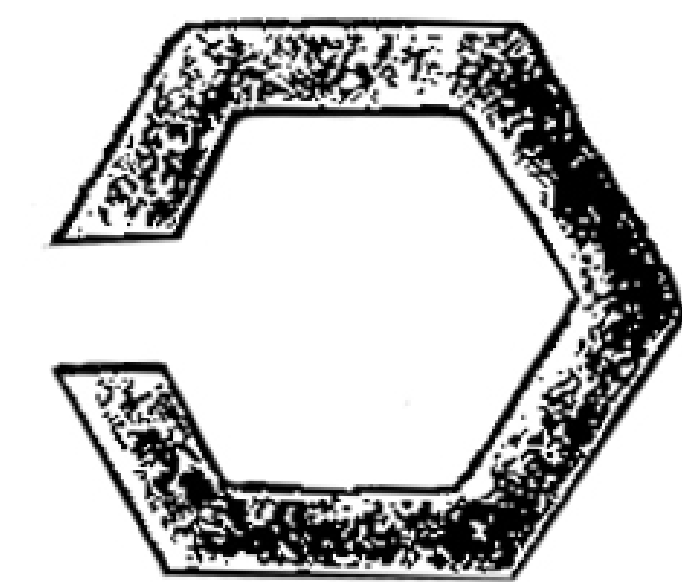
However, more experimentation and study leads to unexpected destinations.

This series of artworks are screenprinted and I love the use of coloured papers to really make the artwork pop off the page.

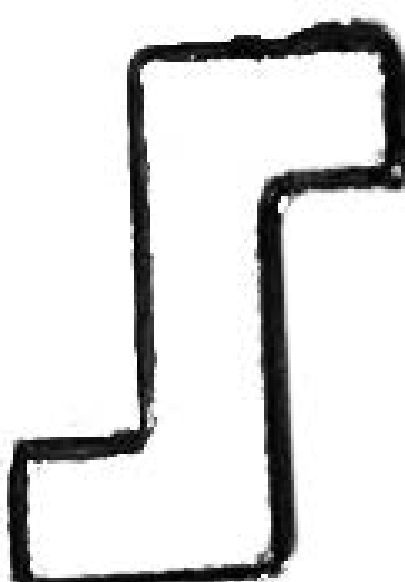
Image source: Pentagram Design [\[3\]](#)

STUDY

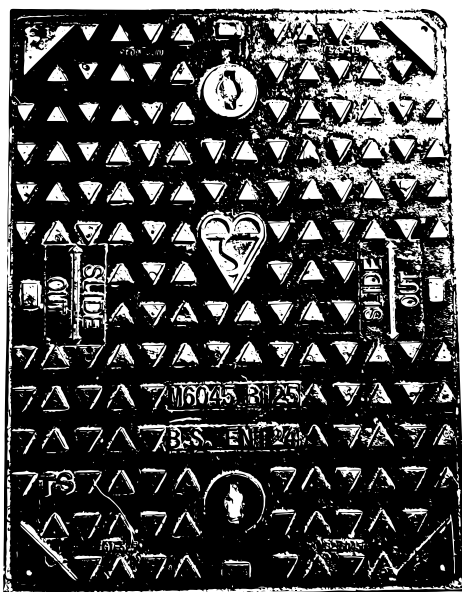
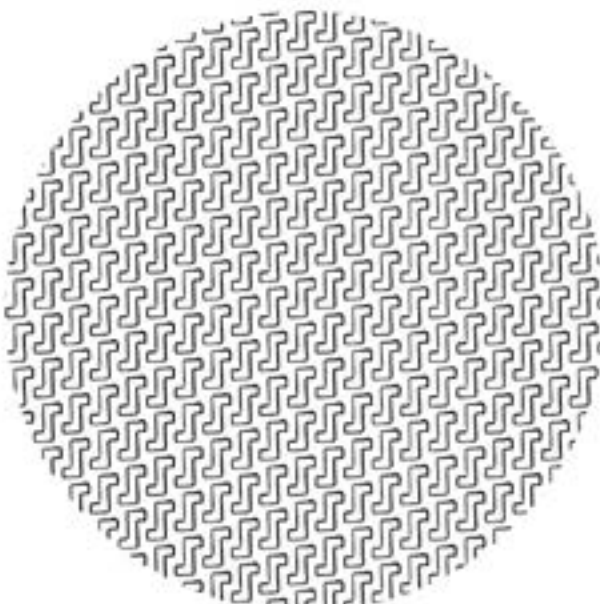
Exploring different aesthetics and pattern.



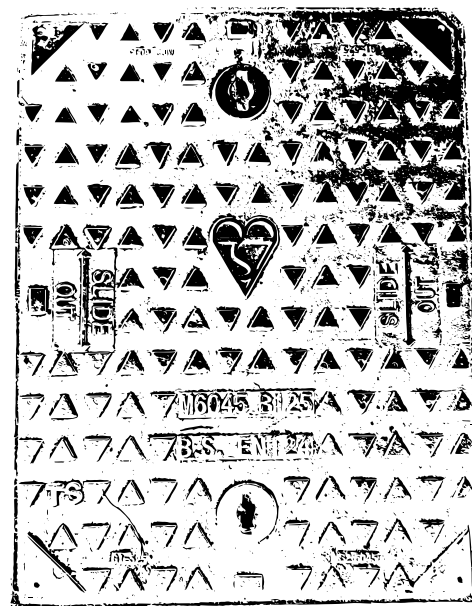
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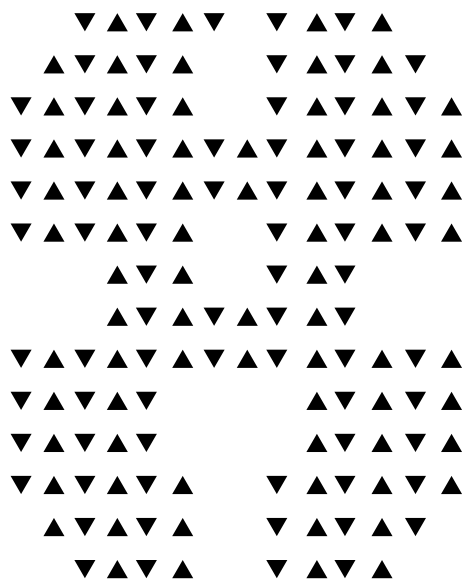
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Contrast image



Relief impression



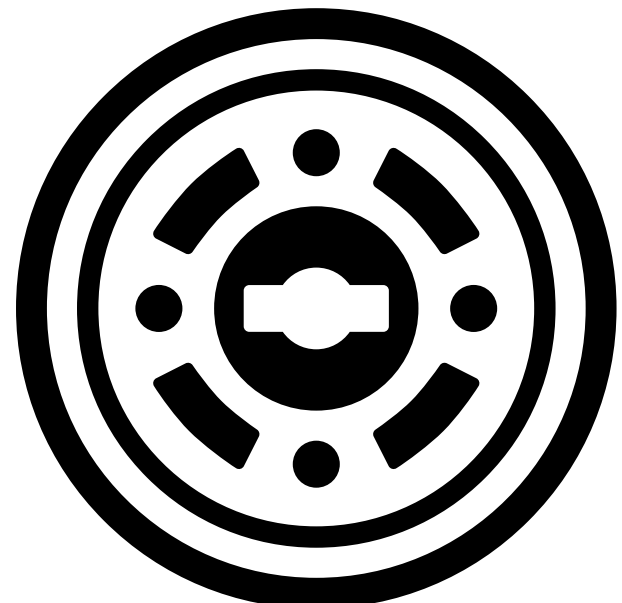
Vector image



Contrast image



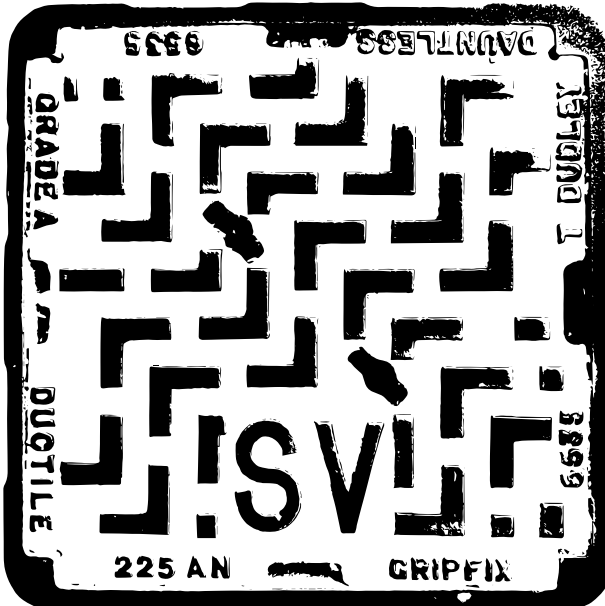
Relief impression



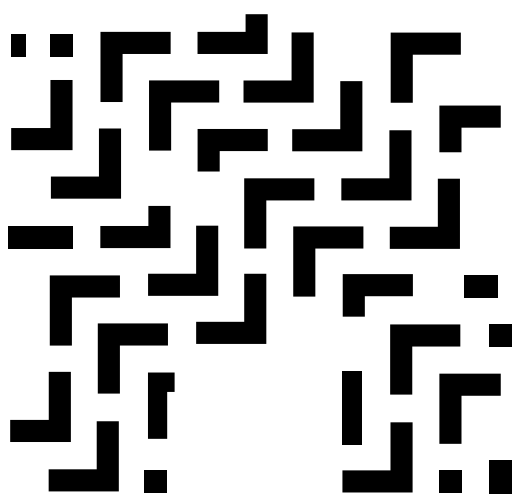
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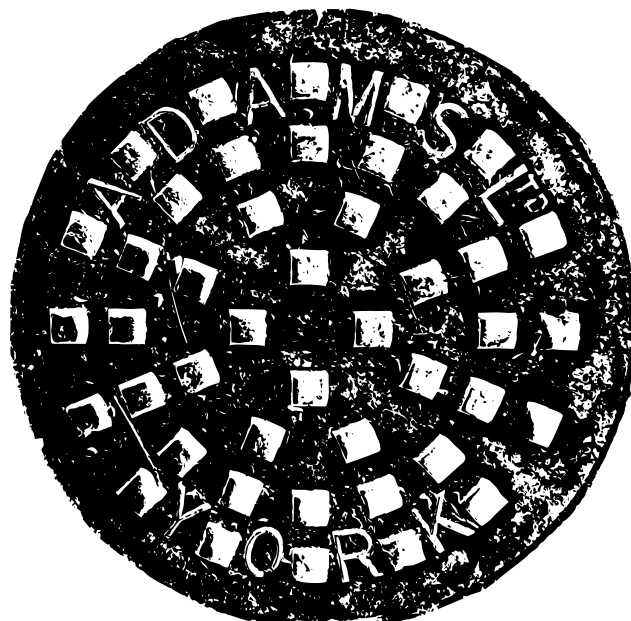
Contrast image



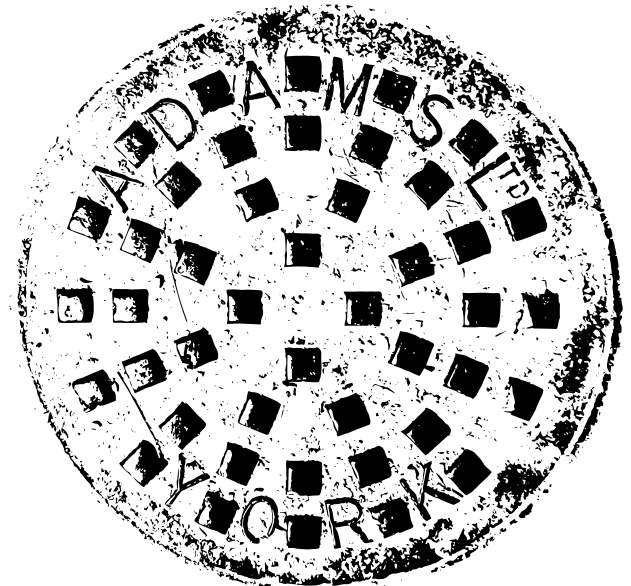
Relief impression



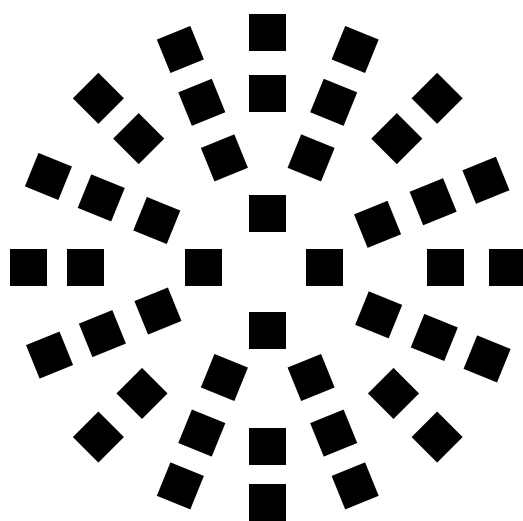
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Contrast image



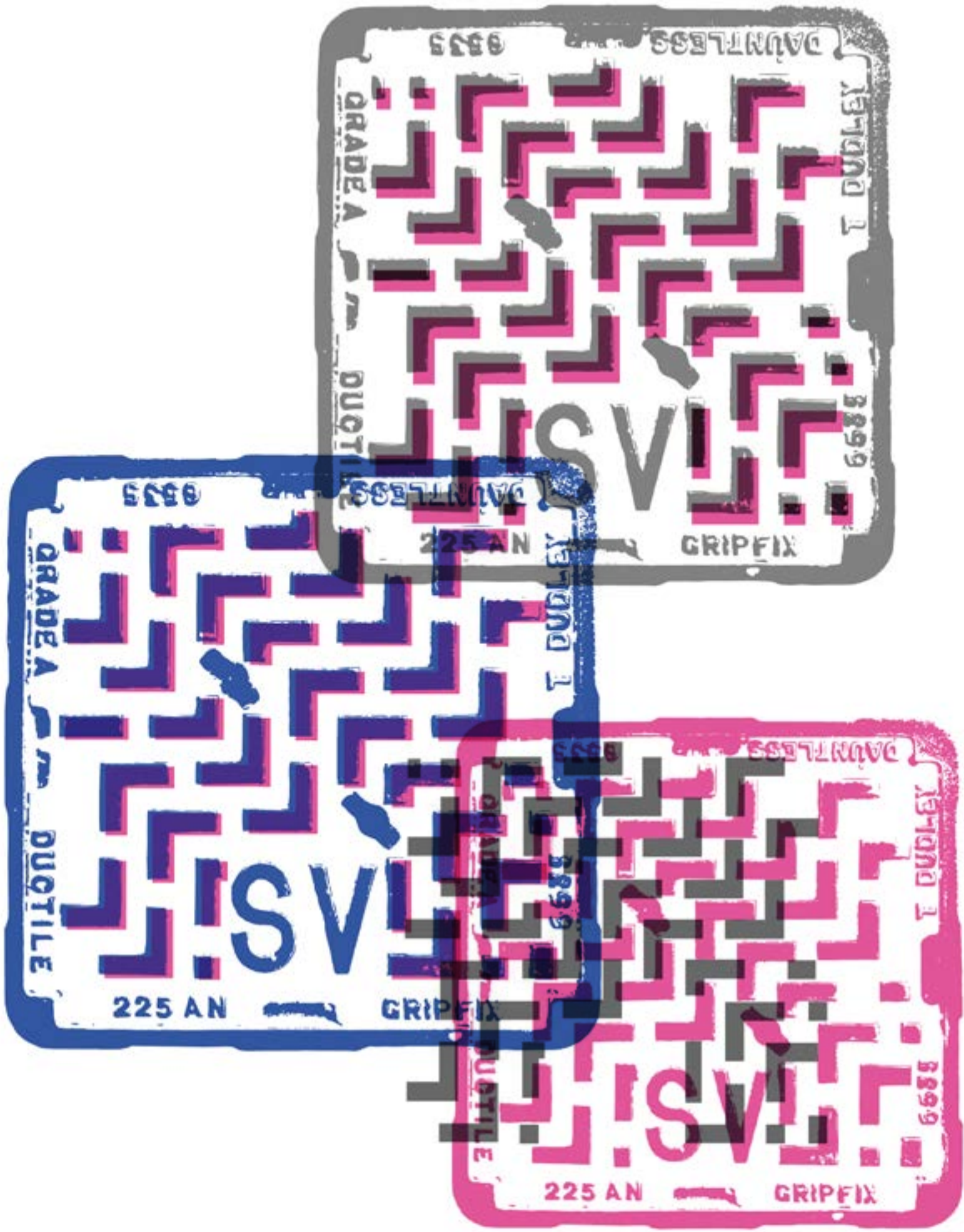
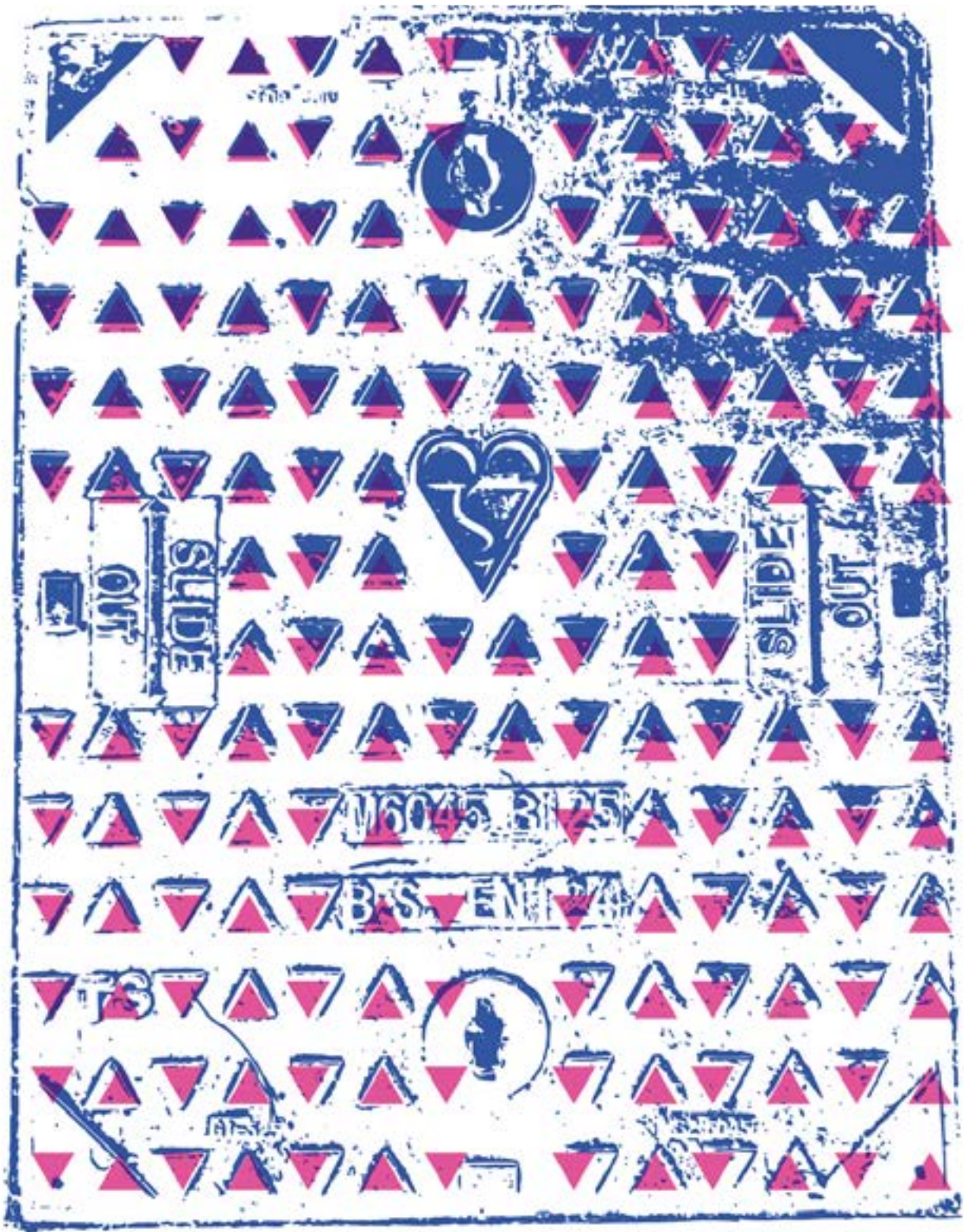
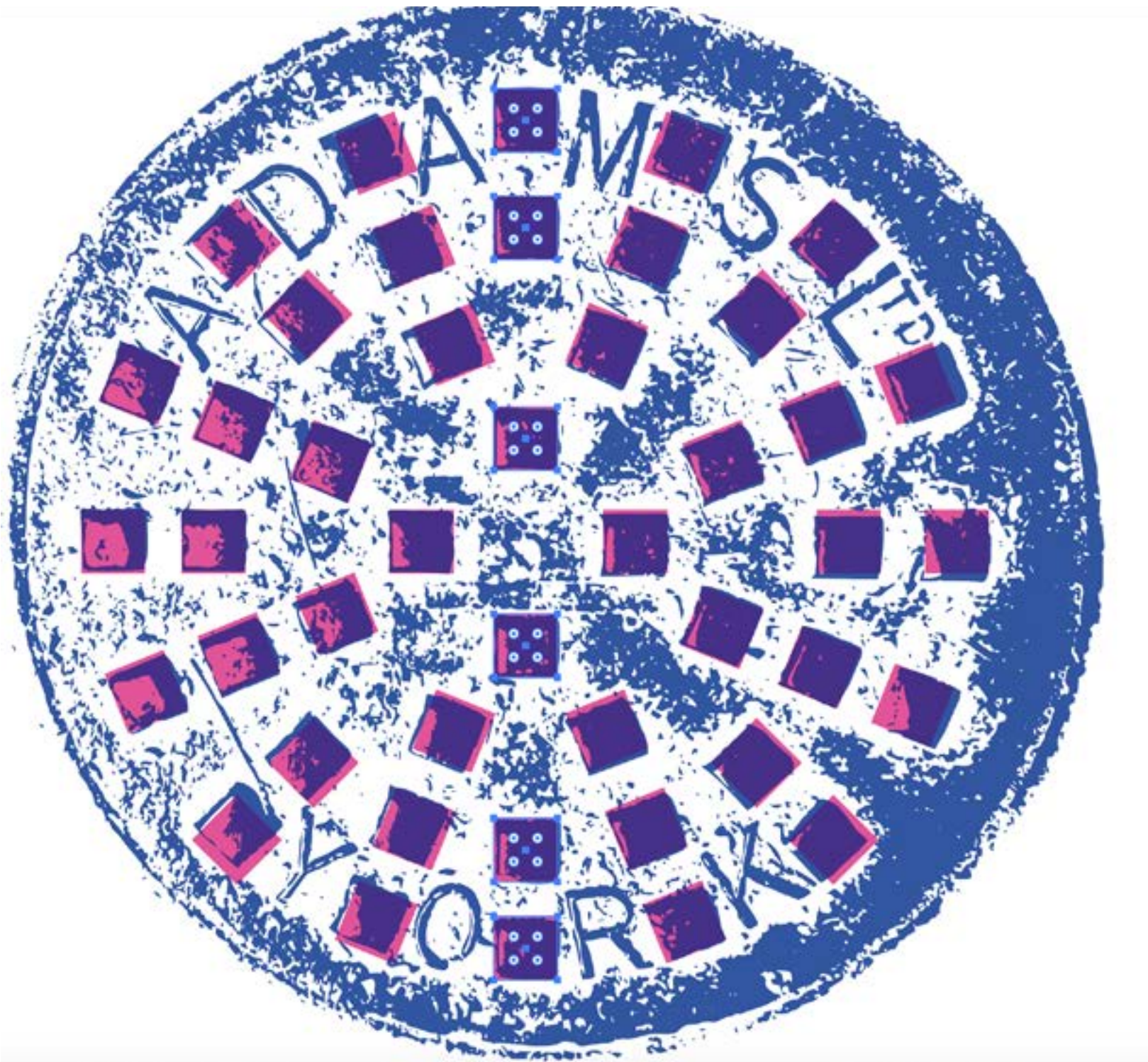
Relief impression



Vector image

RISOGRAPH OVERLAYS

Experimentation with photographs, pattern and Riso spot colours plus transparency to create mockup Riso prints using Adobe Illustrator.



PATTERN

Further experimentation with imagery, pattern and spot colours using Adobe Illustrator.

Here I experimented with overlays of two of the covers artwork and then looked at repeat pattern. I explored grid, brick and hex tiling. These would make for some great cover designs.

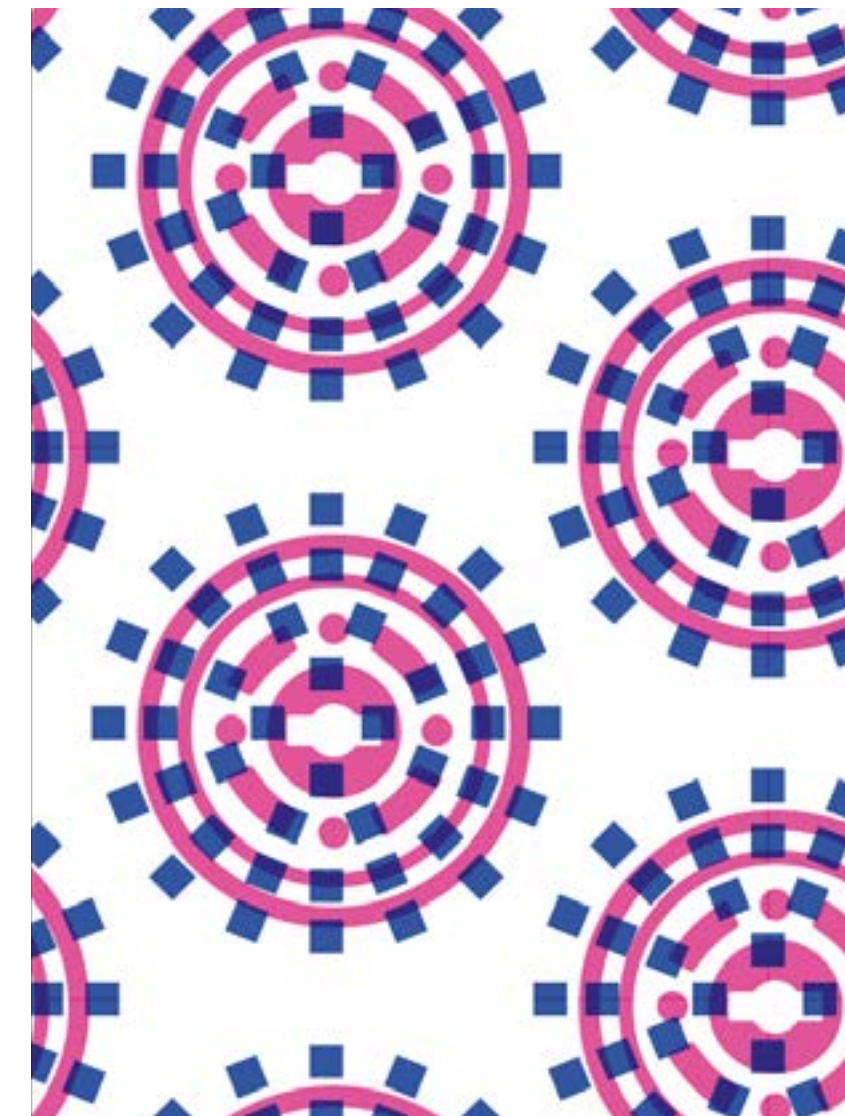
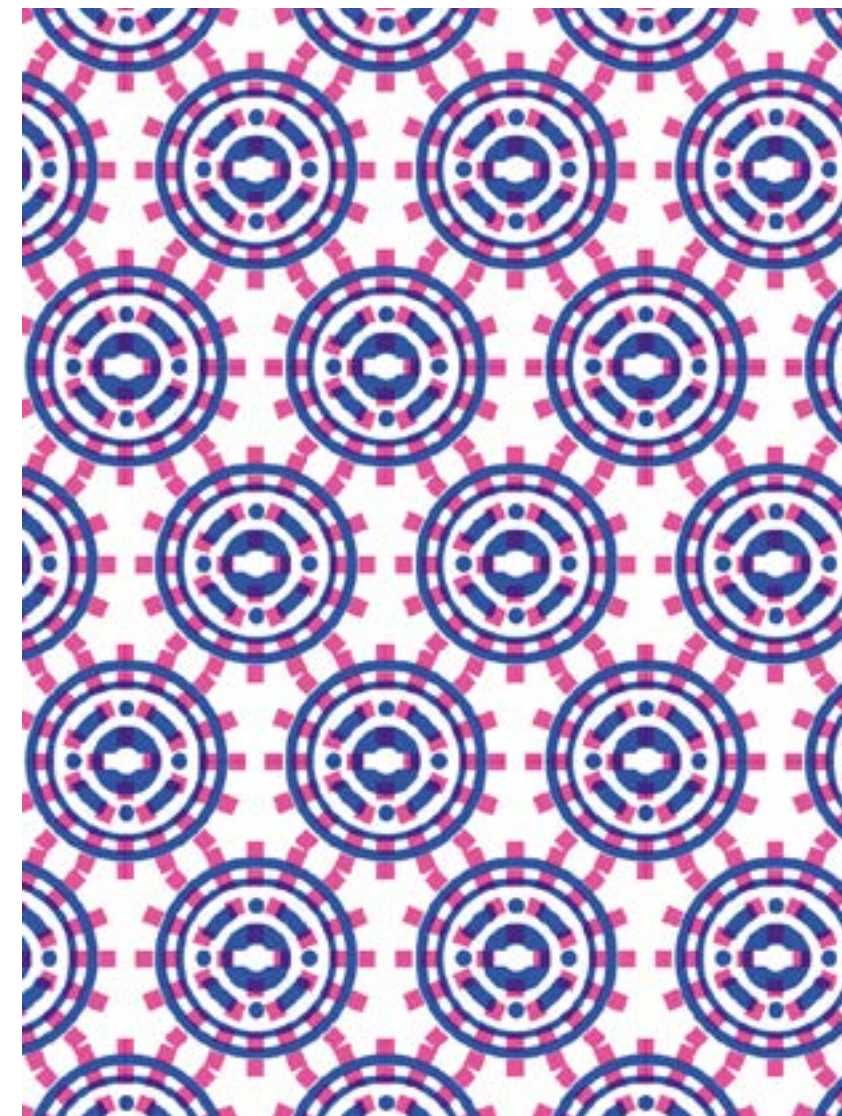
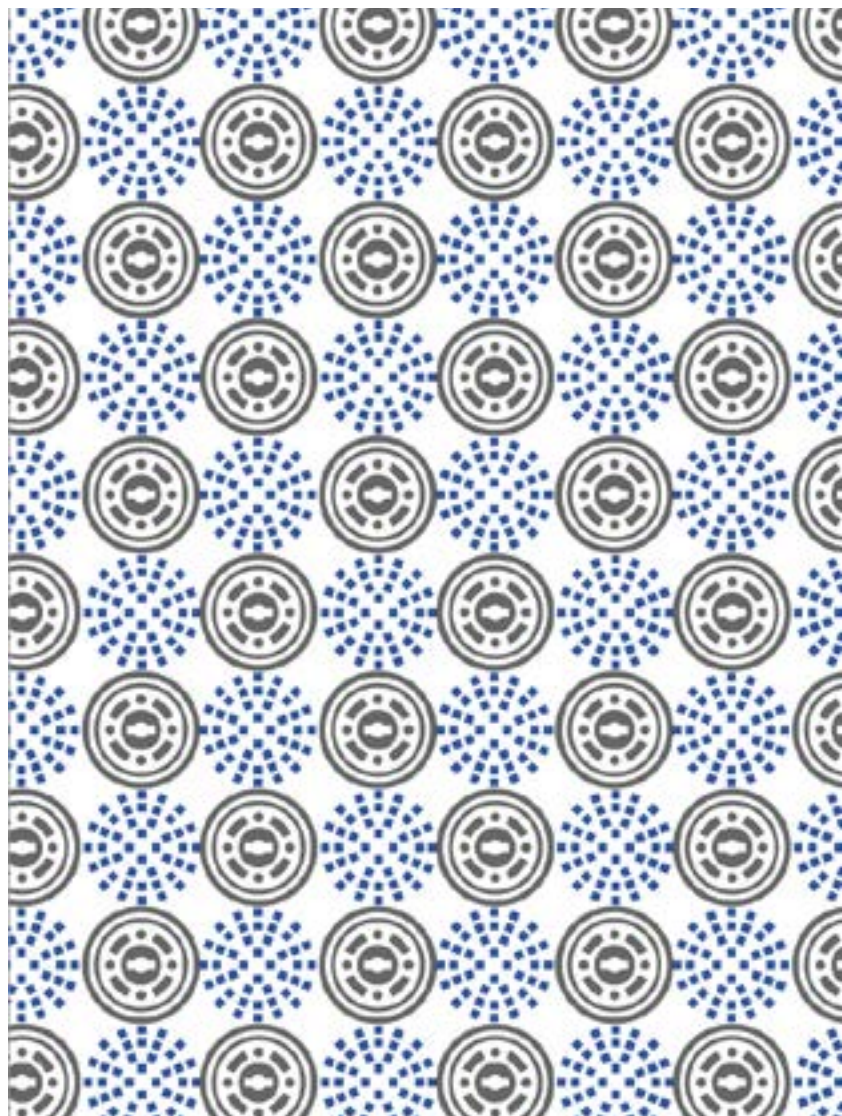
The square tiles below would also make a great tile designs.



COVER DESIGNS

Experimentation with more pattern and lastly started to look at combining paper colour.

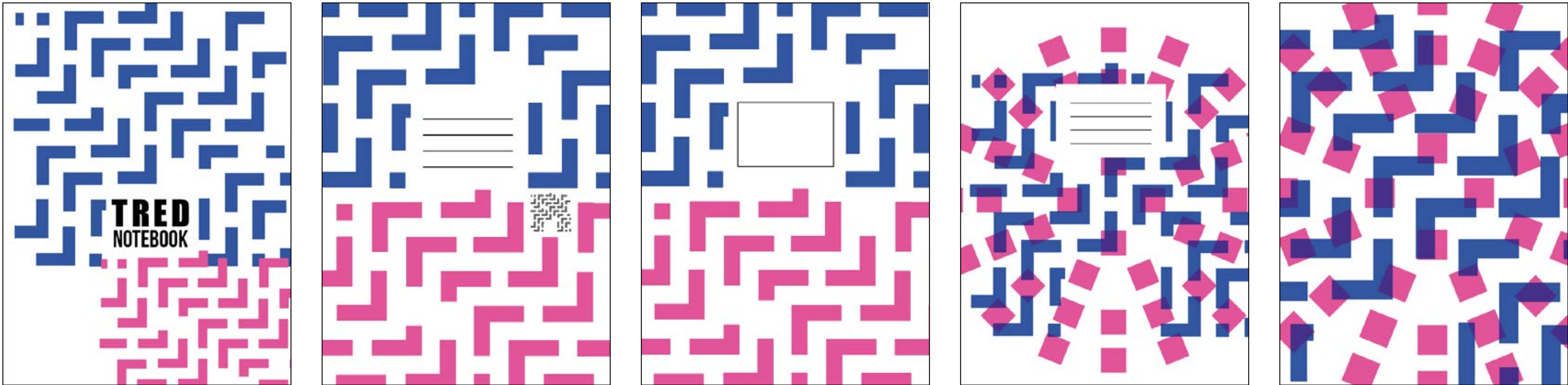
I can see some vintage style book cover designs or end papers emerging, some with Indian appearance and others with a more contemporary feel. The designs with 2-colour will be a bit more serendipitous with the off-set quirks of the risograph machine, but could make for some great unique finishes. All seem a long way from their origin.



COVER DESIGNS

Experiments with the original patterns, adding my own text where the makers mark would have been.

The first layout reminds me of the pixel aesthetic of a QR code giving it a contemporary feel. I am not sure about the text or typeface, as it detracts from the artwork. The space without the text could be a space for the end user to personalise it, just like a traditional exercise book (see examples right). Branding would be on the back of the cover and any other information could be on a belly band. Designs possibly too abstract and in need for more refining.



COVER DESIGNS

Design 1 of 3: Final Designs.

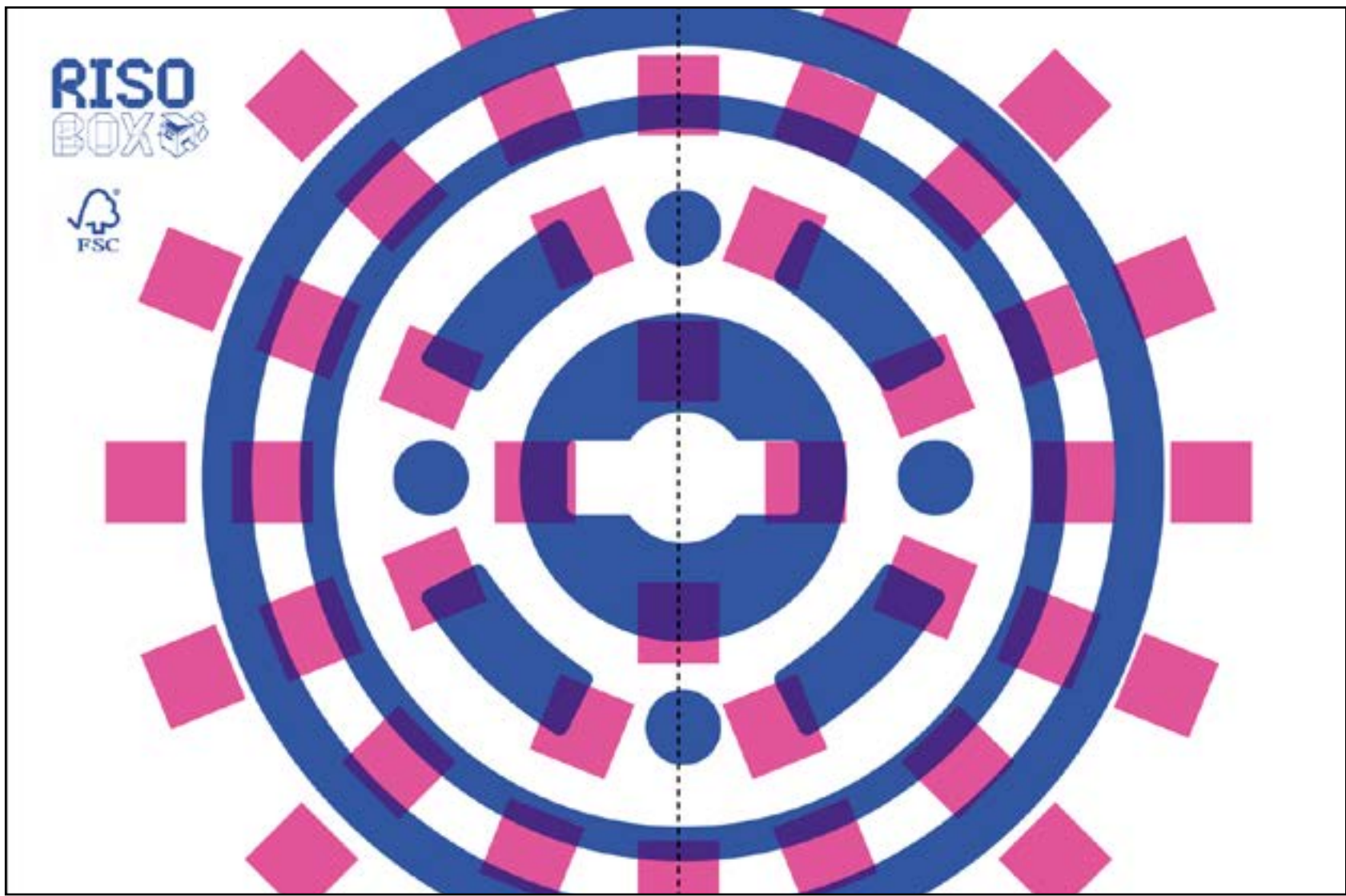
I chose to keep the design simple to show off the artwork and keeping the paper stock to white makes the riso colours pop. I have opted for Colorset card stock, as it is durable with a smooth texture and will allow the owner to really see the inks quality of depth and texture. The Riso Box logo is on the back of each of the notebooks to identify where they came from, along with the paper sustainability logo.



Front Cover



Back Cover



Complete Cover

COVER DESIGNS

Design 2 of 3: Final Designs.

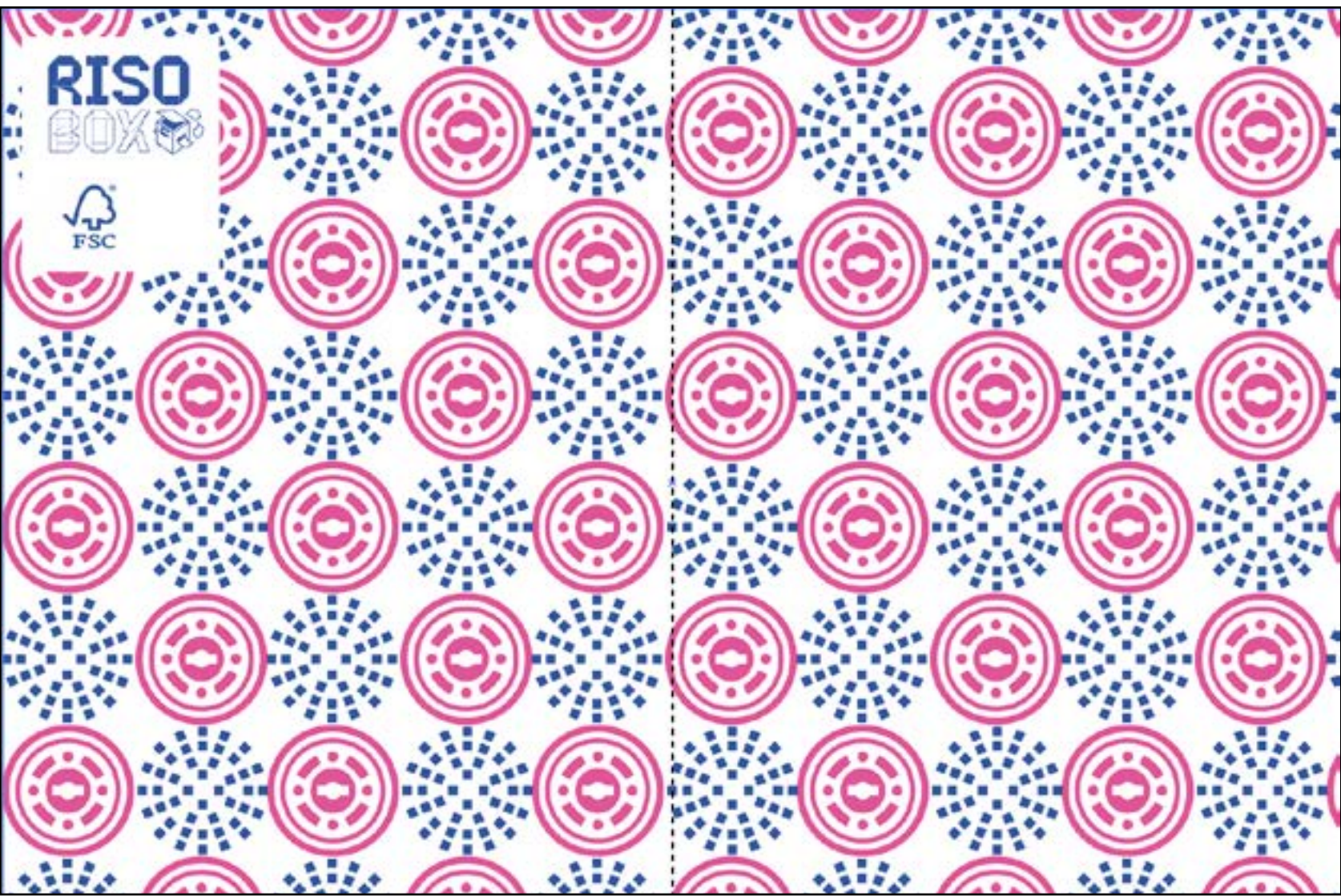
This repeat pattern shows off the utility cover artwork reminiscent of vintage end papers that would appear on the inside cover of a hardback book, possibly of the era that the utility covers themselves were manufactured around the industrial age. The pattern and colours also remind me of traditional Japanese pattern design, quite fitting that it be Riso's birthplace.



Front Cover



Back Cover

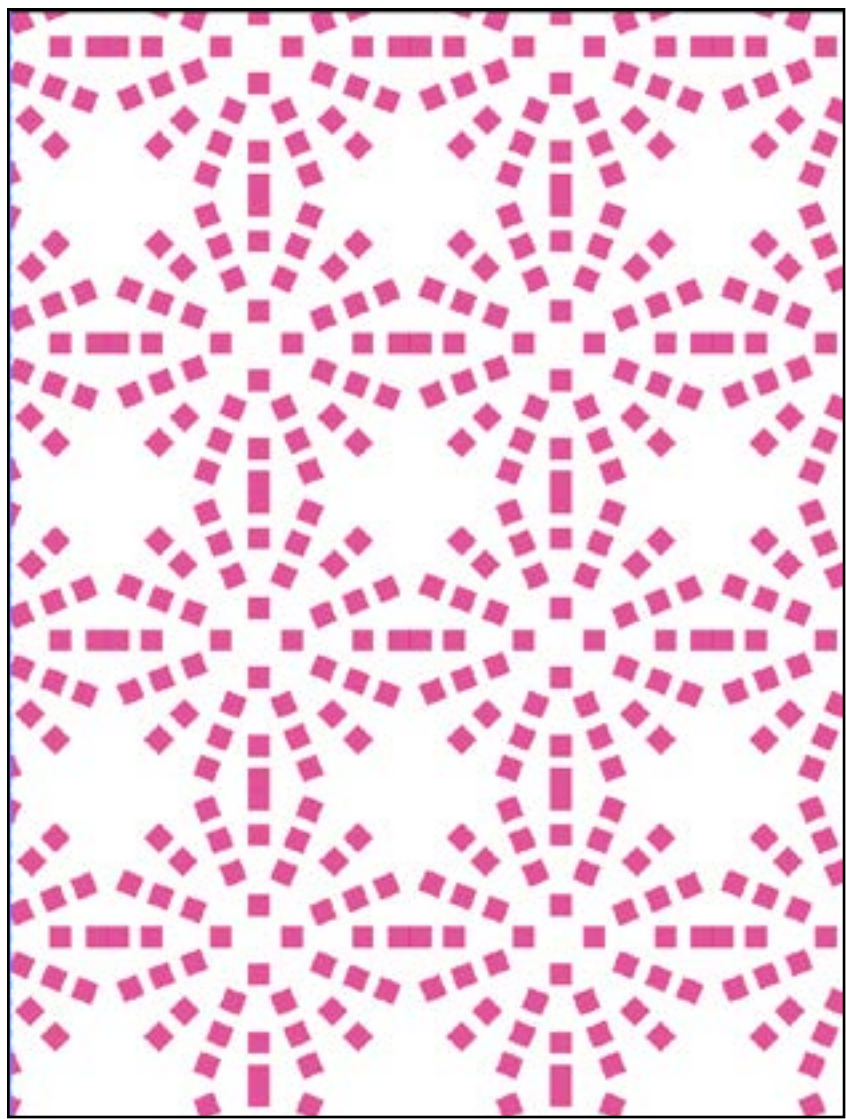


Complete Cover

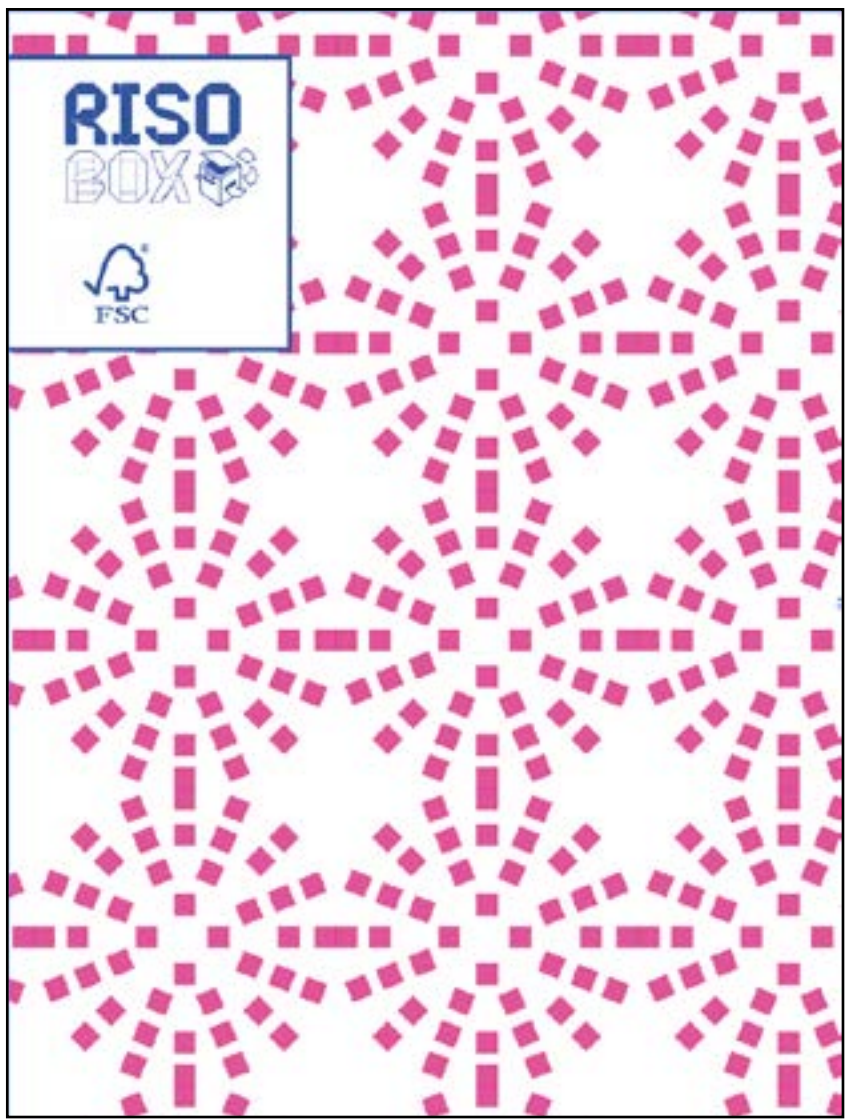
COVER DESIGNS

Design 3 of 3: Final Designs.

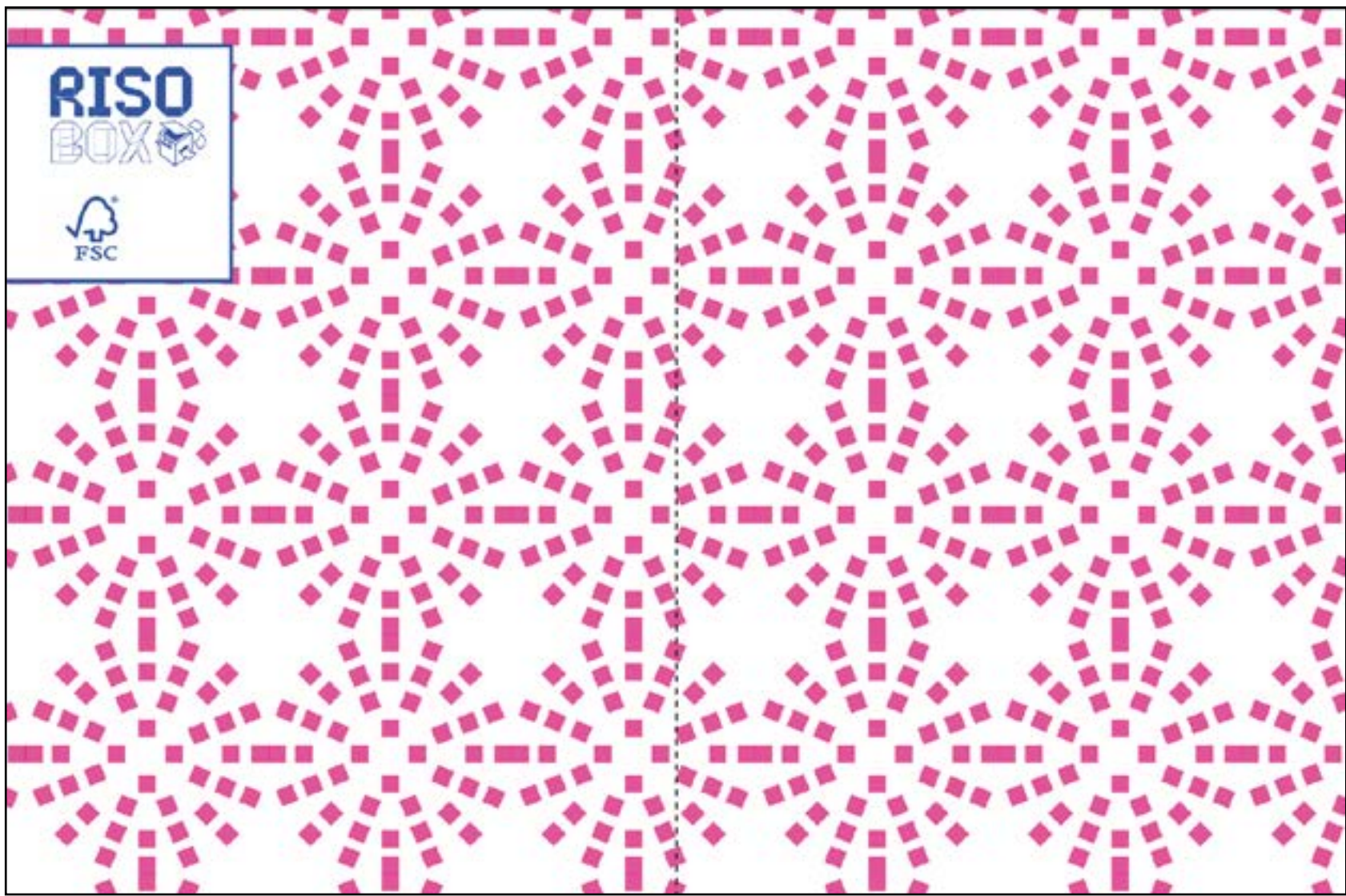
This repeat pattern shows off the utility cover artwork with a more decadent aesthetic. All 3 designs use the Riso Box’s signature colours of Medium Blue and Fluro Pink. Individual notebooks will be stapled to hold the cover and pages together.



Front Cover



Back Cover



Complete Cover

BELLY BAND DESIGN

The belly band will wrap around the 3 notebooks to complete the set.

The belly band will tell of the inspiration that led to the design, as seen below this time with a little note to encourage people to be curious.

Future belly bands could use unused misprints and information printed over the top or alternatively use stickers to go on top. I have managed to source some recycled sticker sheets that will go through the Riso machine.



Notebook artwork based on utility covers that go unnoticed beneath our feet, but have been part of our everyday lives since the industrial revolution during the Victorian era. **What might you notice?**



REFLECTION

Thoroughly enjoyed this assignment and would like to expand on this study, looking further into the history of utility covers.

I love that this project brings to life a fairly unnoticed subject common in the environment with the potential to enliven its history. When I then discovered a similar project, I found it a bit disheartening, as it had been exactly what I had envisaged for a whole series including prints. The saying, ‘everything has been done before’ sprung to mind, but through experimentation and further visual research any subject can lead to something new and a different destination. I actually felt that this was just the beginning and the project has potential for so much more. Afterall, we are all products of our environment and it would be difficult not to draw inspiration from things around us.

I used vector illustrations and patterns created in Adobe Illustrator for the final designs and although initially I was worried the rugged and worn appearance of the original photographs may have been completely lost, the texture created by the riso printing only enhances the finish.

I feel the outcome reflects the values of the Riso Box and its brand identity touched on in my individual report, adhereing to the colour palette and typography.

On reflection a guide to risograph for new print shop customers and how to prepare documents for print would have been more advantageous. However, the notebook set is something that would be available to buy in the shop and at market and would showcase the print quality and craftsmanship of the finish provided by the riso service.

REFERENCES

[1] Cross, E. (2024), Riso Box Individual Report. Available at: <https://elliecross.co.uk/gde730-studio-and-entrepreneurship-week-4-business-project-plans-and-communication-client-relationships-insight-content-structure> [Accessed 19 August 2024].

[2] Cross, E. (2024), Type Lingo Bingo Studio PDF. Available at: <https://elliecross.co.uk/gde720-history-and-futures-complex-simplicity-week-3> [Accessed 19 August 2024].

[3] Pentagram Design. (2024) ‘To celebrate Marina Willer’s new Kickstarter campaign, she is running an offer on print orders placed before Sunday.’ [Instagram]. 1 August. Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/C-H97lPIRwG/?img_index=10 [Accessed 1 August 2024].