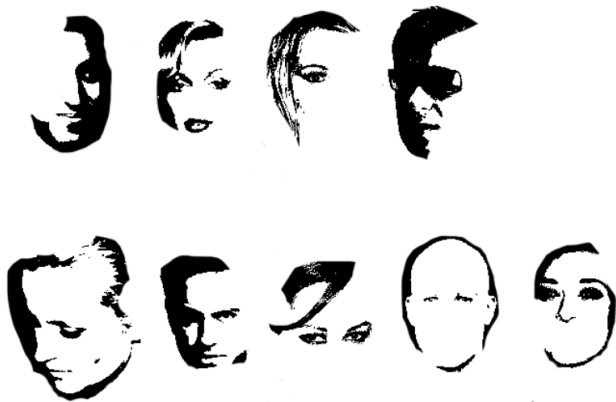


I am a graphic designer and Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) researcher at MIT who uses typography to think about technologies of social mediation and power. In my design practice, I am interested in understanding how characteristics like texture, algorithmic processing, and textual convention change what counts as typography. At Princeton, I designed and printed faculty commissions on a letterpress that used the back of wood type as printed textural elements, and I created a software that translated digital font files into 3D printed letterpress type.

My work-in-progress *Public Display* is a handmade digital display font created by erasing parts of celebrity faces from a facial recognition training dataset. My PhD research concerns the social and political consequences of unethical data collection for facial recognition, which are increasingly integrated into policing practices that disproportionately target communities of color. The common practice of academics and corporations building facial recognition is to mine photos of unsuspecting individuals on the internet without their knowledge or consent, public figures and private citizens alike. These entities seek to train algorithms to read patterns within faces, but the line between pattern matching and racist phrenology is often thin.



Some neuroscience researchers believe that face perception and word form recognition could be competing functions within certain parts of the brain, making it hard to read a face as a letter (and vice versa). With *Public Display*, I'm interested in this forced choice between the whole and the part. To read the words, one must step back and erase the individual faces. Focus too much on recognizing faces, and the words become illegible. This font places the acts of reading texts and reading faces into tension.

I pair this work with *Biometric Sans*, a typographic system that stretches and shrinks type in response to the timing of the writer's keystrokes, treating letterforms as more form than letter. Algorithmically varied letterforms foreground the mediation of writing in software, and indicate the omnipresent apparatus of digital surveillance on which these two artworks are based.

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BIOMETRIC SANS

Questioning typography's place in the hierarchy of mark-making presents the opportunity to problematize the boundaries between textual and graphic form. Through this work I hope to explore the ways in which images are read and letters viewed in the language of data.

Jonathan Zong