

thesis digest

2024

an exploration of

body-centric design systems

PERFORMANCE BY DESIGN

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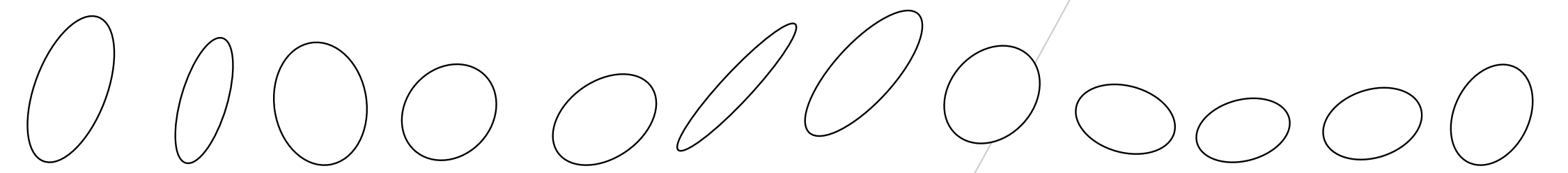
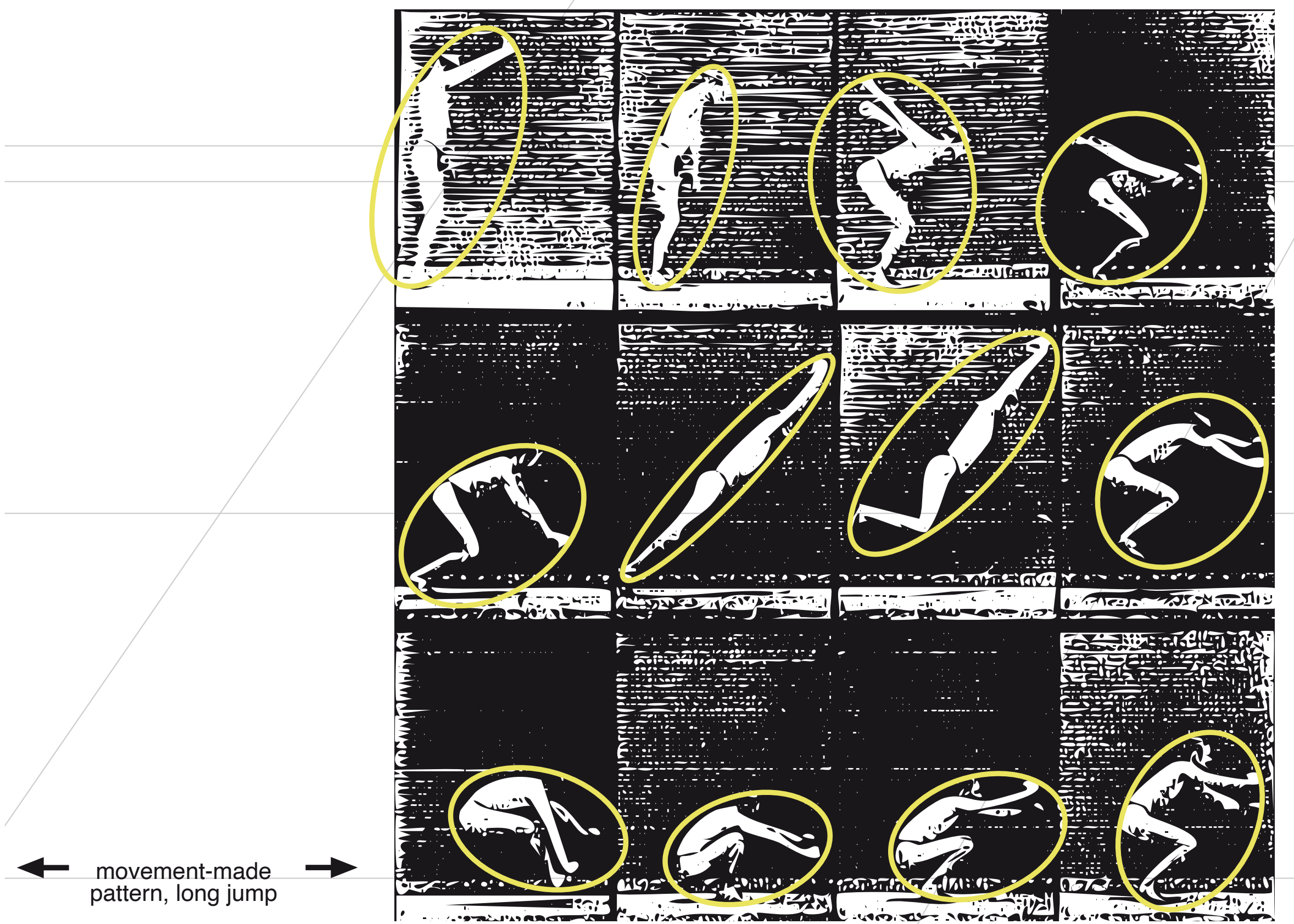
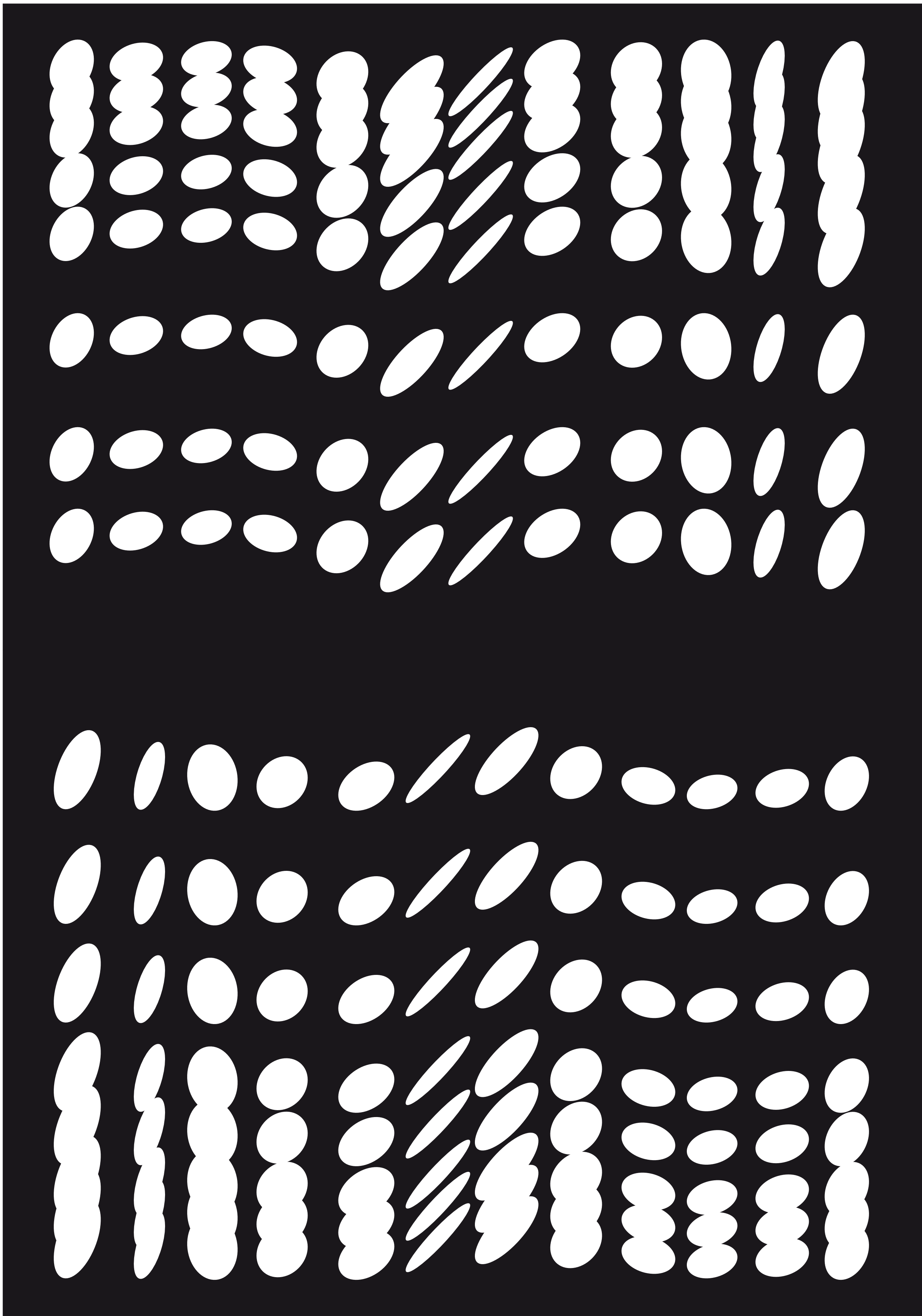
2024

PERFORMANCE

BY DESIGN

body-centric design systems

by gabriella escobar



thesis:

As graphic design influences evolve from nature, comes the opportunity to embrace a human-focused framework through body-centric design.

body-centric design.

→ I am reconstructing graphic design systems around the human body using “body-centric design” to create a deeper and more authentic connection between graphic design and the human experience.

→ I am reframing these systems through the athlete's body, leveraging performance data and biomechanics to influence core graphic design elements.

why?

I am an athlete (it is as core to my identity as being an artist).

athletes are very good at logging their activity data over time.

performance data metrics are challenging to understand as is.

a greater connection understanding our bodies can be created when connecting with data generated by the body.

activity tracking holds meaningful memories and events. let's give the data some life.

how did I get here?

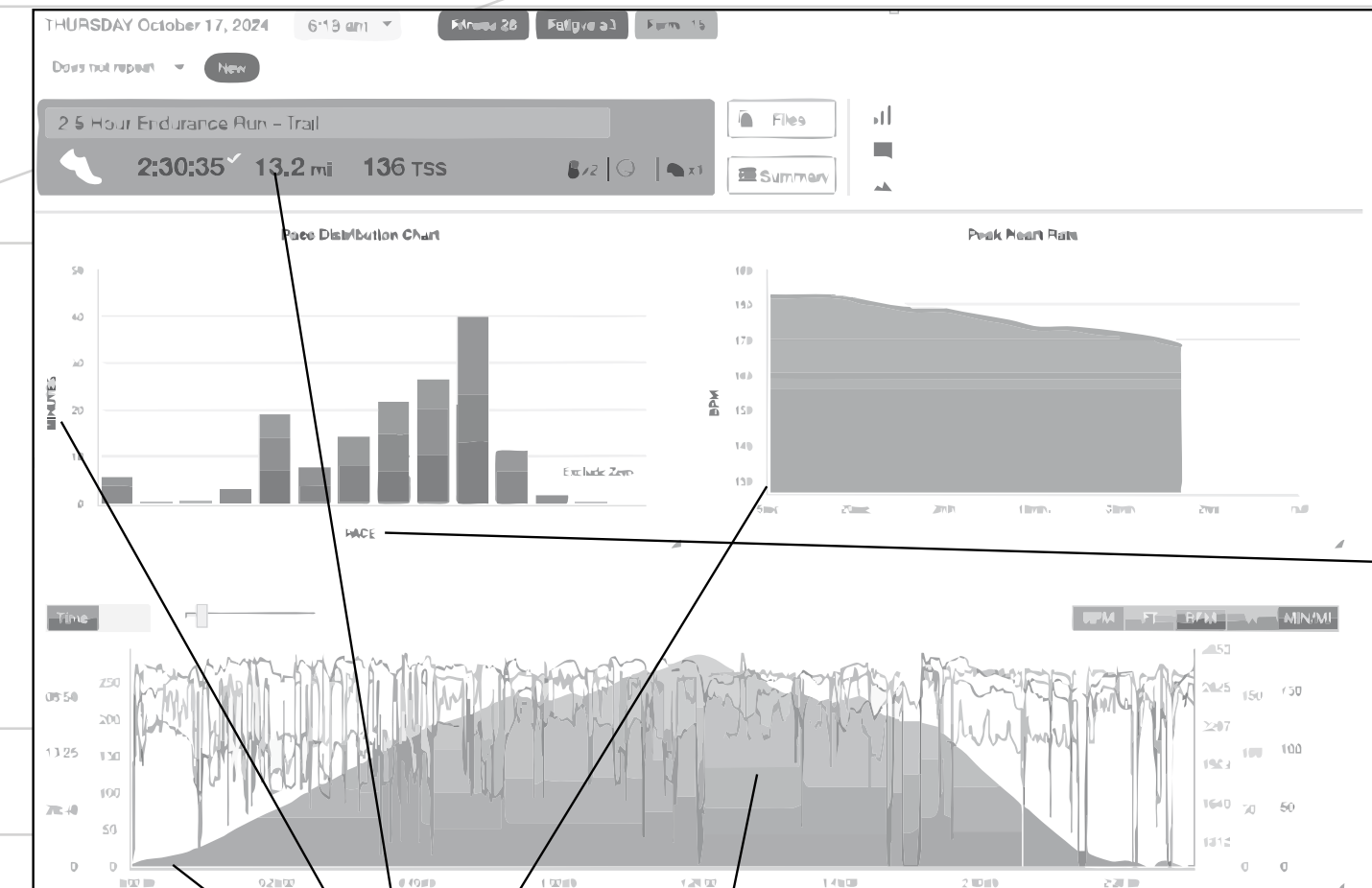
As a runner of 7 years, I have tracked my performance data since day one. This data has crafted my journey from running the 5k to 50 mile ultramarathons.

From 3 years on Strava, an activity tracking platform, I have logged over 800 activities. These activities not only track my fitness but a journal for life through the pandemic, navigating my undergraduate, and graduate degree.

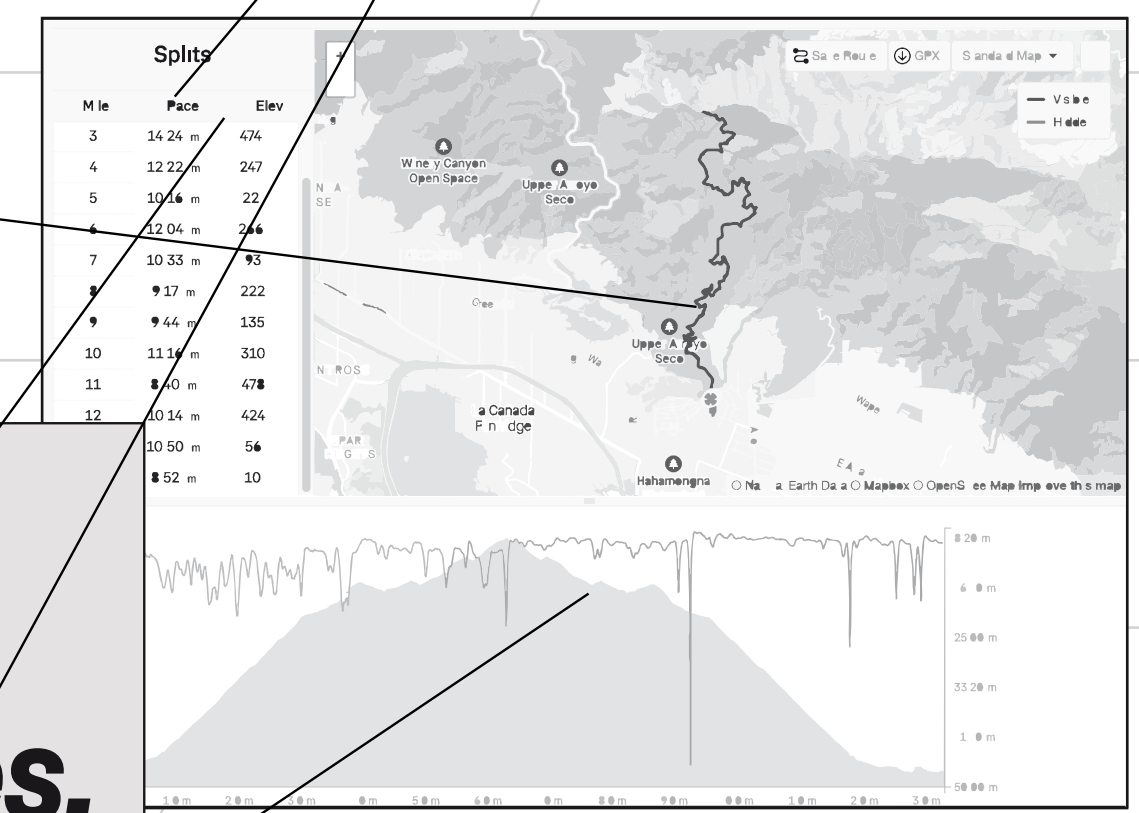
Strava has over 120 million registered users. Multiply these numbers by the 5 daily gigabytes of data collected per person that wears smart wearables. That is 600,000 terabytes (600,000,00 gigabytes) of data collected per day by athletes.

Much of this becomes dead data as it piles up day by day, and activity after activity. For athletes, like myself, strides in performance often commemorate significant life accomplishments.

I am curious about how to bring life, and body, into this data that we generate and lose exponentially.



← all of these graphs are documenting the same run on different activity tracking platforms: training peaks, strava, and garmin connect



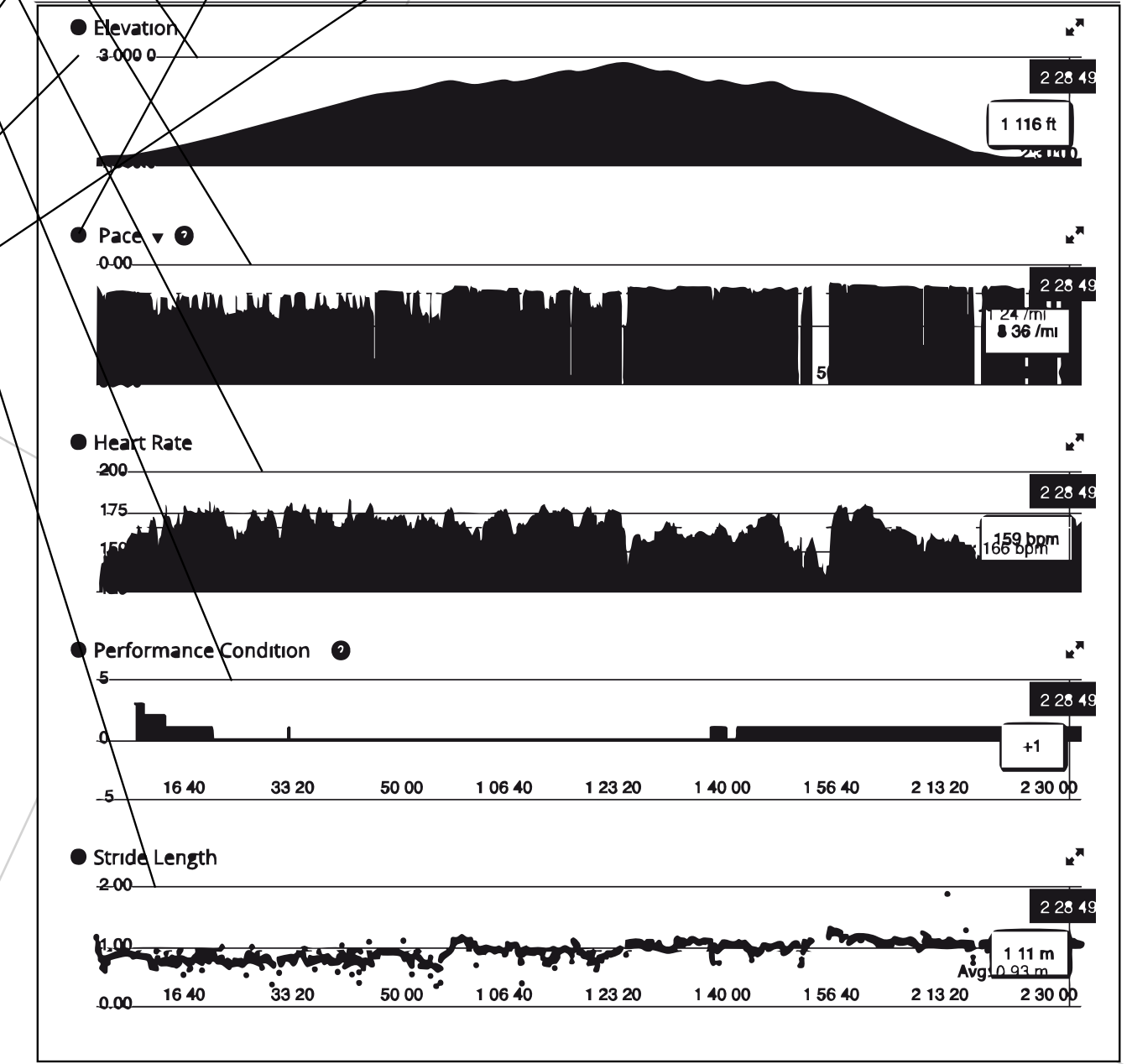
performance data visualizations fail to connect with athletes.

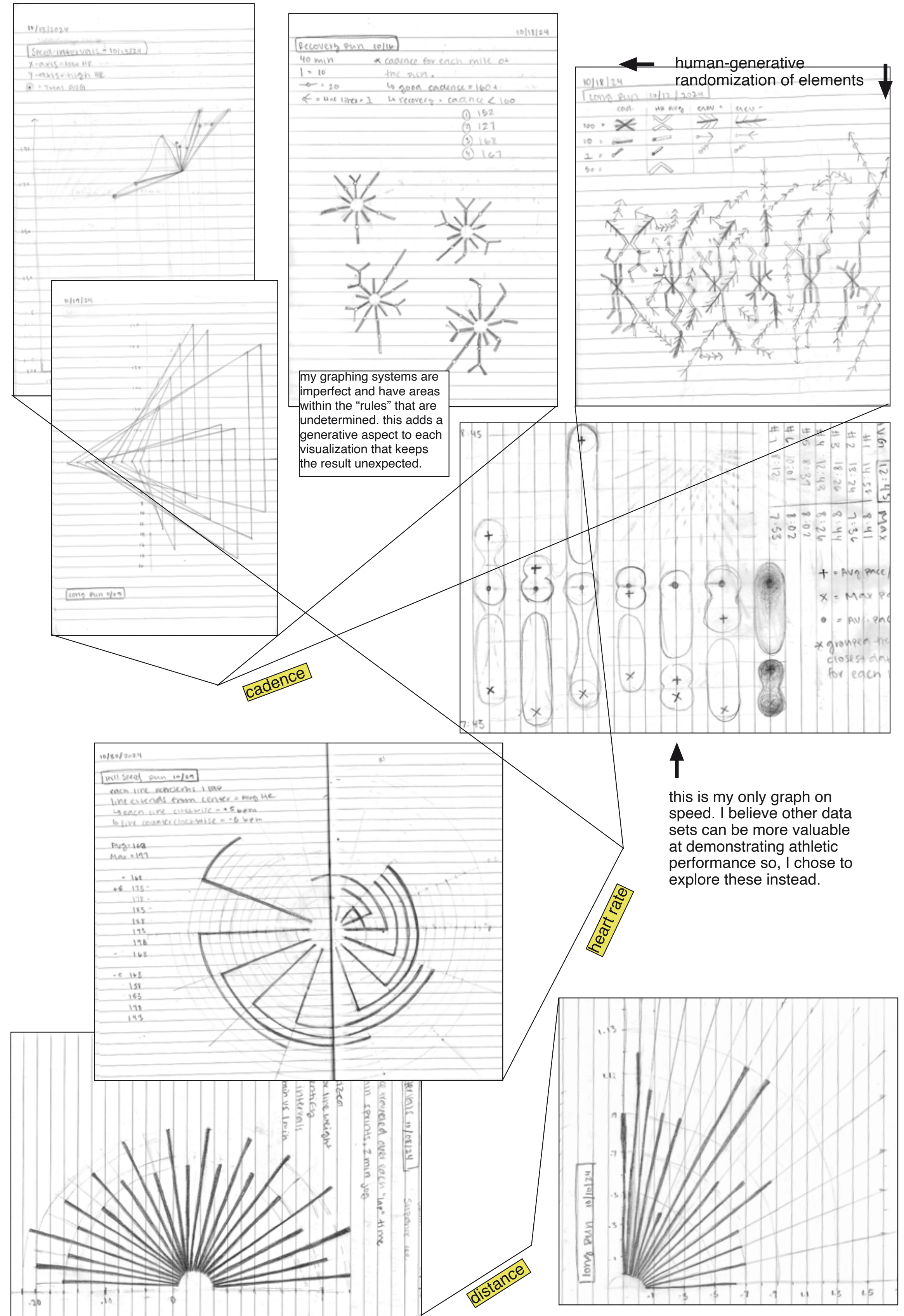
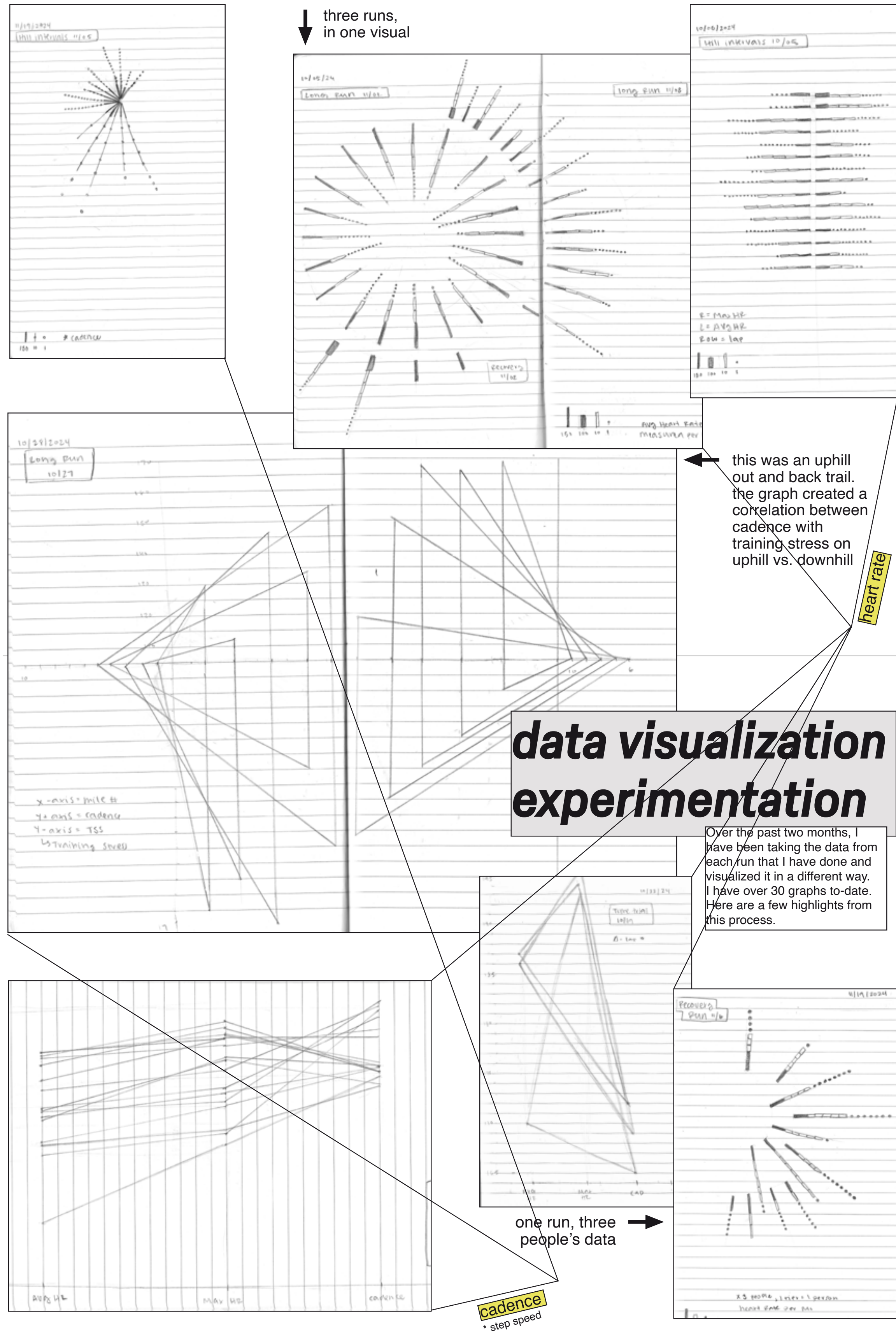
problem

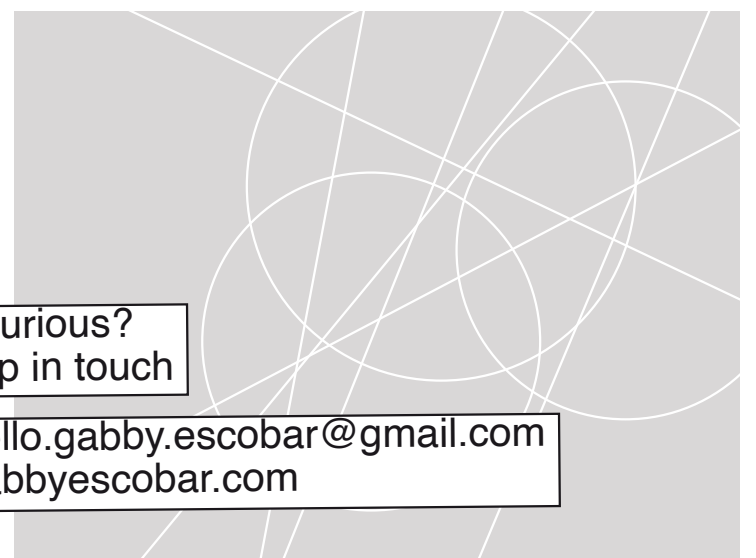
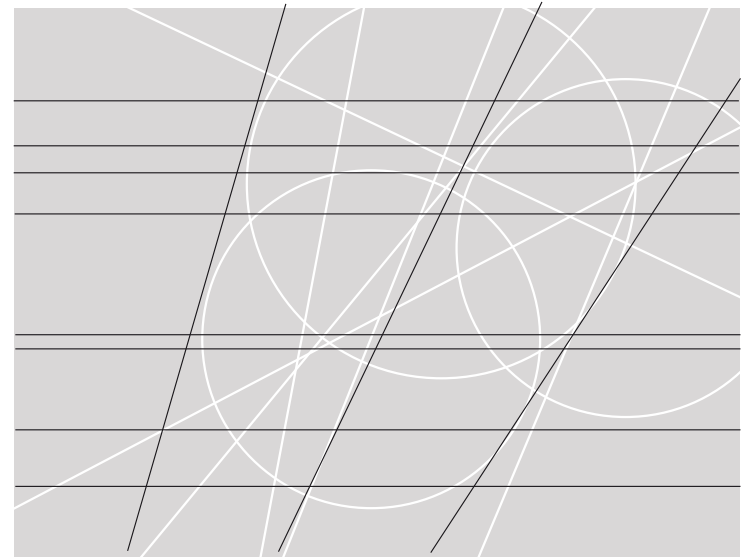
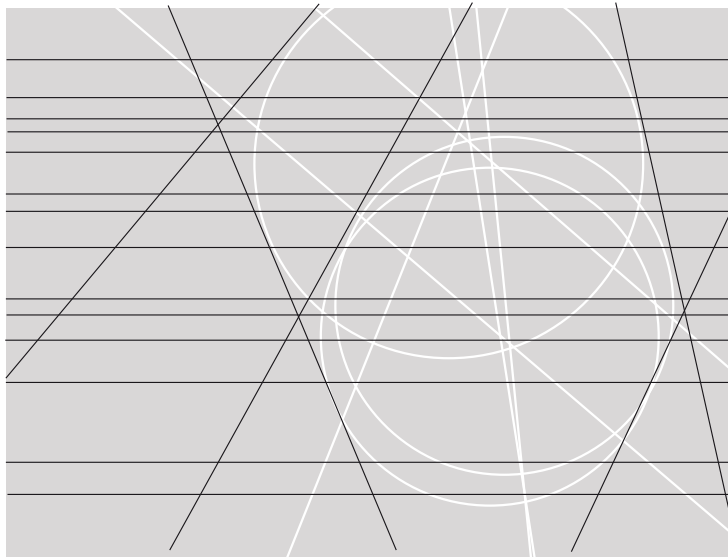
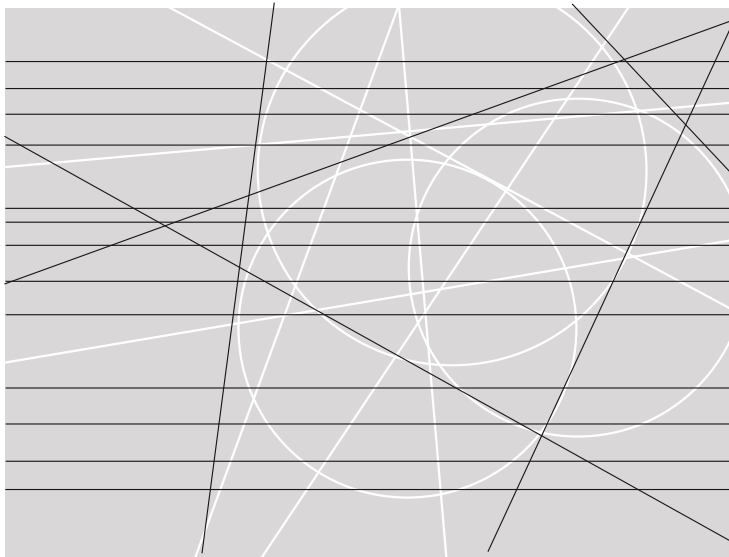
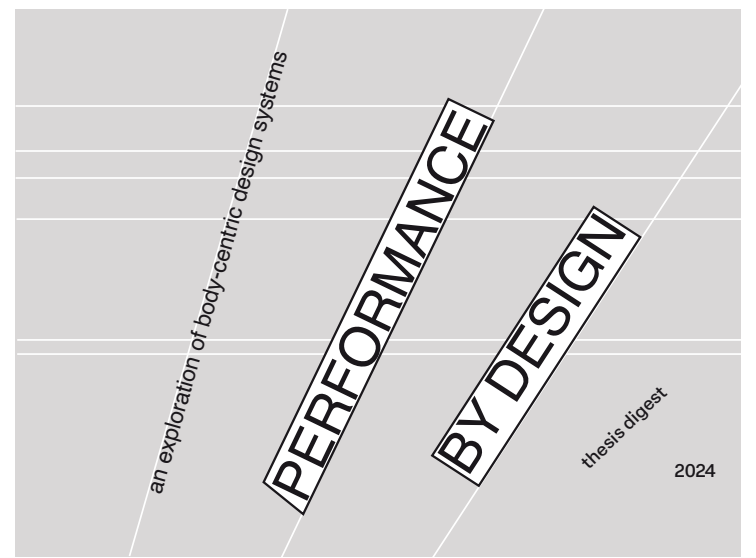
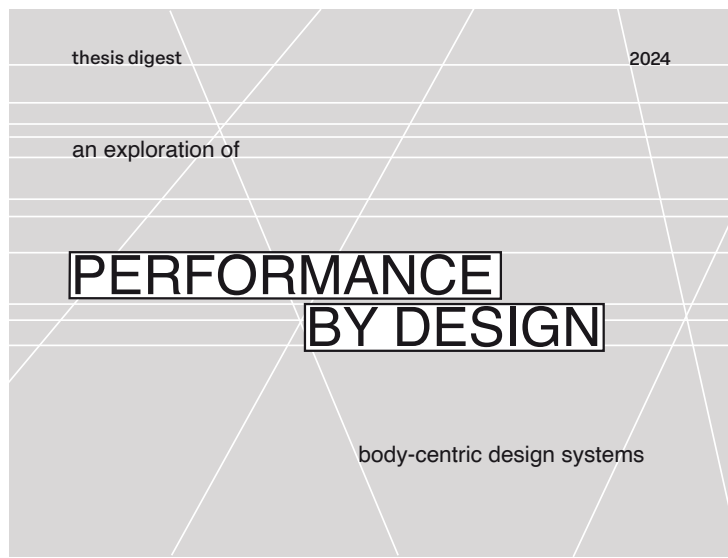
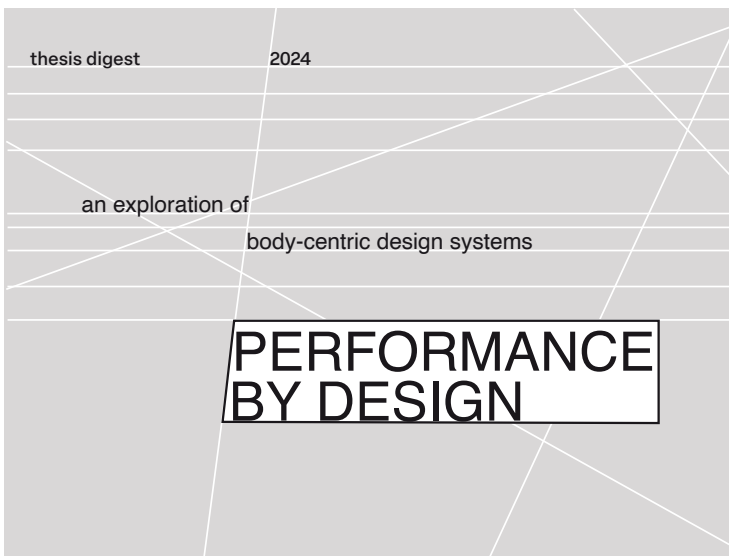
vertical gain

insights:

- all graphs are horizontal →
- repetitive data, visually inefficient to understand. →
- different metrics take on similar graphs and forms. →
- data day after day, and person by person looks the same. It is impersonal and stale to read. →

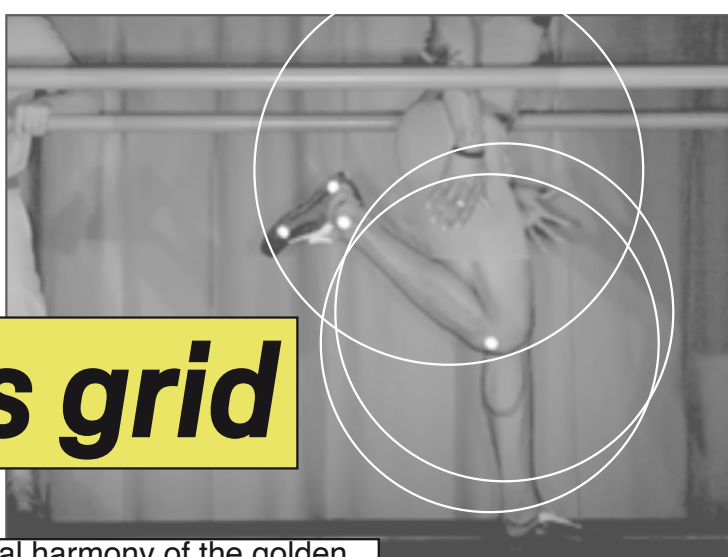
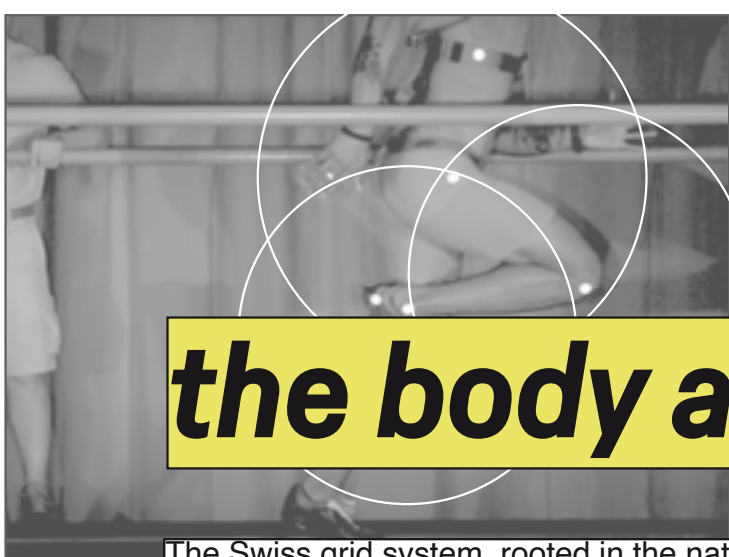






feeling curious?
let's keep in touch

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the body as grid

The Swiss grid system, rooted in the natural harmony of the golden ratio, resonates with the body as an extension of nature. I sought to reinterpret this grid through the dynamic movements of a sprinter.

By tracing circular paths around key joint movements and marking angular lines along trajectories of motion, I mapped out a grid based on the intersections of these elements. These lines became tangential references to the biomechanics of sprinting, forming a structured yet organic system.

The front and back cover artwork reflects this exploration, capturing the sprinter's evolving form and process in three distinct stages.

