

A process book
about another book
about randomness,
chaos, coins, an
InDesign crash, \$\$\$,
basketball, and a
grandma who sings.



Chandra Phenpimon



Research



1.



2.



3.



2

Project 3: Unseen/Seen

1- 2. Layout design inspiration sourced from Pinterest.

3-4. Layout design inspiration sourced from Are.na

The podcast I chose was “Stochasticity” from Radiolab. It explores themes of randomness, chaos, and coincidence. I initially approached each spread as a unique moment and wanted to experiment with unconventional layouts and image treatments. Overlapping floating images stood out to me, and I made them a key element of the final design.

Given the chaotic theme, I wanted to incorporate many visual elements, such as graphic vectors, text, and images. I found expressive typography inspiring and intentionally disrupted the reading order to reflect the randomness. Much of my research focused on grid-breaking layouts with rotated elements, which I tried to incorporate into my own work.

One challenge I faced early on was figuring out how to include the interview portions of the podcast. Since my podcast had sparse text compared to the dense layouts in my visual research, I had to think carefully about how to typeset the content while keeping the expressive, seemingly random type consistent with the theme.



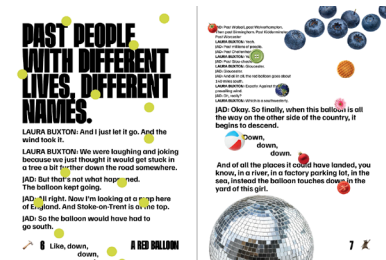
Discovery



5.



6.



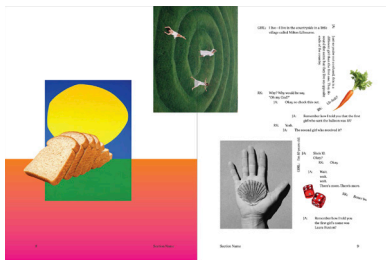
7.



8.



9.



10.

5-6. 1st iterations of section 1 (Laura Buxton)

7-8. 2nd iterations of section 1

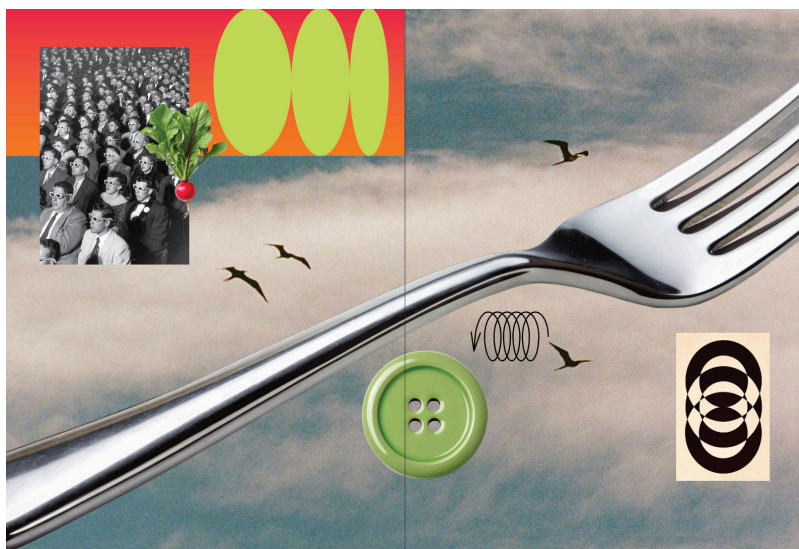
9-10. 3rd iterations of section 1

11. big fork! (my favorite spread)

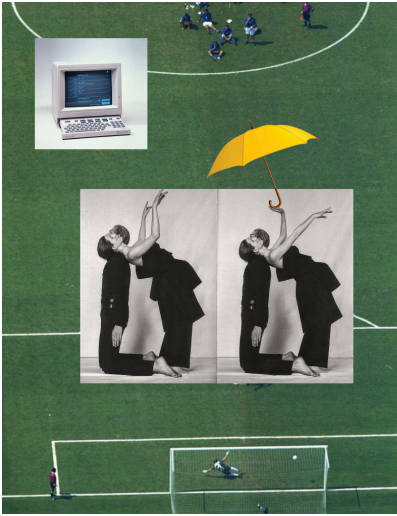
I experimented a lot with this project. It's probably the most iteration I've ever done. I started with bold layouts and large text (img. 1-2), but something about them felt too cut-and-paste. The designs were also very colorful, which felt overwhelming and I eventually decided to scale things back.

In the second round, I focused more on image usage and how to integrate visuals better. However, this version felt too much like a magazine layout, which didn't align with my goals for the project.

In the next iteration, especially in the first section, I started to achieve the look I wanted. I enjoyed juxtaposing random images to emphasize their strangeness and create new context. This approach led to one of my favorite spreads in the book which is a giant fork placed in the sky.



11.



12.



Jumble, Random sloppiness, Noise, Random noise, Chaos, Noise, Sloppiness, Noise, * Noise, Sloppiness, Noise, Random noise.

SW: Here we are again.
JA: ...as tick-tocky an affair as we've always assumed it to be, in fact, scientists have never actually seen it. RK: Well I mean, it's very small, but finally scientists have figured out a way to turn on a light when it happens, so they now can see a gene turning on a protein.

RK: Yeah.
JA: And what they saw.
CZ: Well ...
JA: ... was astonishingly un-clocklike.

Sometimes he used this word.
CZ: Random.
JA: Or this.
CZ: Fluctuating.

JA: And this one.
CZ: Noise-Chaos, Noise.
JA: Definitely used that one a lot.
CZ: Jumble, Noise, Noisy, Accident, Noisy, Noise, Noise, Noise, Noise, Noise, Noisy Sloppy, Chaotic noise, Sloppiness, Sloppy and fluctuating, Fluctuate. It's really crazy in there.

CZ: Laughed Indeed, yeah, so these are E. coli. These are harmless residents of our gut. And they're also ...

Section Name

57

13.

JA: If you look at the whole world of people being literary editors in this country, you're not even high in a different question.

RK: What are the odds that somebody somewhere ...

JA: Somebody somewhere.

FC: ...would this literary twist?

EC: "That's what's the right one in a million or so."

RK: "It would be worse to be that it just held on me?"

EC: "That's kinda it, sort of. It's kinda, well."

EC: And it's sort of ridiculous. But what we know is that it was given back on some kind of gross overconfidence. It's really a hundred percent chance that some kind of gross overconfidence. "Was there the odds of that ball was going to be?"

EC: For instance ...

JA: In Connecticut, emphasis of a place called the Shattuck Shattuck Country Club, they were twice. A man in Pennsylvania, he was twice in a row, just a California writer was a Bentley 5 and the Super Lotus in the same day. The number of that were calculated at one in 250,000.

14.

6

Project 3: Unseen/Seen

**12. 3rd iteration
of section 1**

**13. 1st iteration
of section 2
(biology)**

**14. 1st iteration
of section 4
(lottery ticket)**

Disaster struck one night when my InDesign file became corrupted, and I lost more than half of my book. I was devastated and honestly feared the book might never be completed. Rebuilding everything from scratch felt overwhelming, but as I worked through it, I realized I didn't fully agree with some of my earlier design decisions. In a way, losing the file forced me to reflect on what wasn't working.

Then, I made an even crazier decision. I decided to scrap everything on purpose and start the book completely over. Some thought I was insane, but I knew I needed to feel confident about what I was presenting. Starting fresh gave me the freedom to rethink every detail, and it turned out to be the best decision I made. Breaking away from the constraints of my previous designs allowed everything to feel more intentional.

Each section of the book had its own unique challenges and energy. The coin flip section became a chaotic explosion of overlapping text, while the scratch-off lottery spreads brought a sense of interactivity and playfulness. I experimented with unusual formats, like incorporating smaller and colored paper, which added layers of surprise to the overall design. The result was a jumble of ideas that, I think, perfectly captured the essence of randomness.

One of the boldest decisions I made was for the basketball section. I introduced circular pages and experimented with type on a path. I believe that embracing such a playful, unconventional format pushed the design further and reinforced the unpredictable nature of the project. Each decision, from the layout to the materials, felt purposeful yet experimental. I think this is what made the book feel like truly my own.

15. 1st iteration of section 5(slots)

16. inside cover exploration

17. short sheets inside section 2 (coin toss)

18. 4th iteration of section 1 (Laura Buxton)

All the sections suddenly came together. The first section was meant to introduce the idea of randomness and tie it into the overall design of the book, especially in how type and images are used. The second section, focused on biology, is all about noise—specifically, the noise created by layering different sizes of typography. At first, it had weird abstract backgrounds, but I eventually changed it to a smaller page size and focused solely on the text. I also added in new sections, like the heads and tails section (17), right in the middle of the coin section. It's great to see images intersecting with that text-heavy part. Another moment I really enjoy is the slots section, with the color-shifting text. It's a simple move, but I believe it effectively conveys the subject of each individual story. I think that's where the randomness really comes into play and ties to the context of each section in a engaging way.



JAD ABUMRAD
I want to start the show today with a truly remarkable story, which at least initially involves this girl right here.
JA Laura Buxton is her name. Remember that name.

2

A RED BALLOON

LAURA BUXTON
I should tie my hair back.
JA And Laura, let's do this like a movie.
LB Like a movie.
JA Yeah.
JA Okay, it's June, 2001.

ROBERT KRULWICH
Where are we, exactly?

JA Oh, we're in a little town in northern England called ...
LB Stoke-on-Trent.
RK Stoke-on-Trent?
JA Yep. Imagine a little English house in this town. And the camera zooms in, and there standing in the front lawn is little Laura Buxton. She is 10 years old.
LB Yeah. Well, almost 10.
JA Whatever. She's a tall girl.
LB Pretty tall for my age.
JA Right. And in her hand, she's holding a balloon. A red balloon. You with me so far?
RK Yeah.
JA Okay, so earlier that day, Laura had taken a little card and stuck it to the balloon. And on one side written ...
LB My name.

3

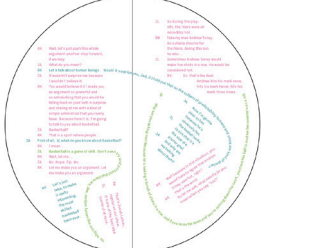
18.



19.

Jumble. Noise. Noisy.
Accident. Noisy. Noise.
Noise. Noise. Noise. Noise.
Noise. Sloppy. Chaotic noise.
Sloppiness. Sloppy and
fluctuating. Fluctuate. It's
really crazy in there

COIN TOSSES



21.

10

Project 3: Unseen/Seen

22. 4th iteration of section 1 (Laura Buxton)

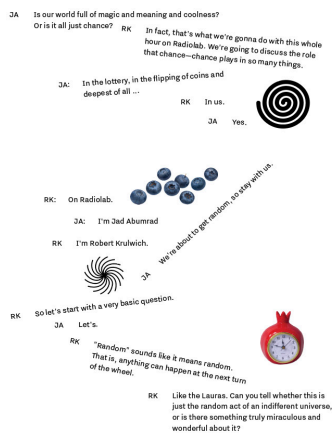
Most of the refinement in my book focused on creating purposeful cohesion and intentional disruption. I worked on having certain images “invade” other spreads to feel slightly out of place while still connecting to other parts of the book.

Another major challenge was scaling things back. With so much happening on every page, I realized that if everything feels random, then nothing stands out. I learned a lot about creating repetitive patterns and moments and strategically breaking them to maintain balance and interest.

I also received feedback to incorporate some of the surrealist spreads from the earlier version for a scale shift. Bridging these two approaches, especially in the first section, became my favorite part of the book and, in my opinion, the most successful. I learned a lot about creating meaningful contrast during this process.



22.



A RED BALLOON

**23. 2nd iteration
of section 5
(slots)**

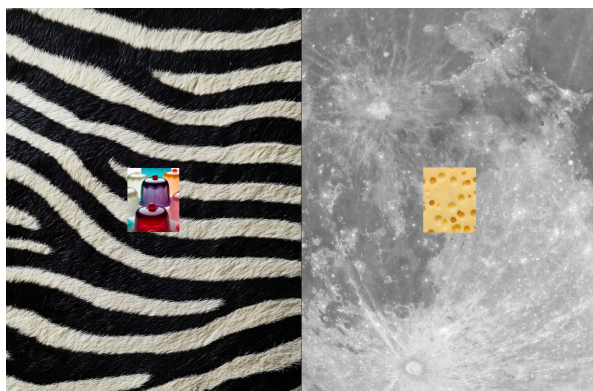
**24. 1st iteration
of section 6
(layering)**

**25. 1st iteration
of section 7
(image)**

The final area of refinement was pacing, which was one of the biggest challenges. How do you pace something that is all over the place? The goal was to pack as much as possible into the story while still maintaining flow.

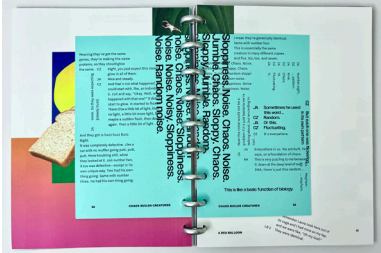
I focused on how each section could transition into the next. I wanted to build a rhythm where some parts felt visually climactic while others were quieter. For example, in the coin toss section, there's a lot of typography, but since all the text is the same size, it doesn't dominate the page. Instead, the hierarchy shifts to the smaller images placed on the short sheet, creating a subtle yet deliberate balance.

I think setting guidelines when creating the spreads helped with pacing by preventing each one from being equally chaotic. The combination of varying scale sizes also helped break up type-heavy and image-heavy spreads. By introducing some breathing room, I was able to create more contrast (and thus randomness) and give the reader more space to absorb the content.

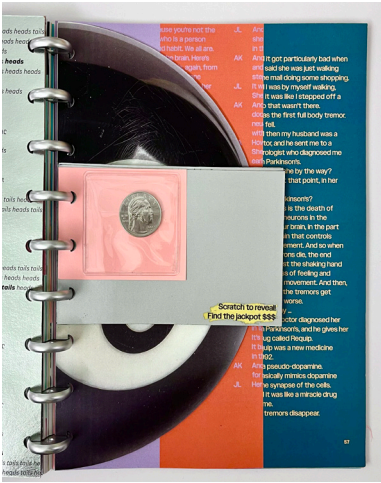


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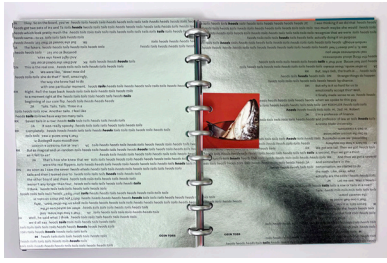
Criticism



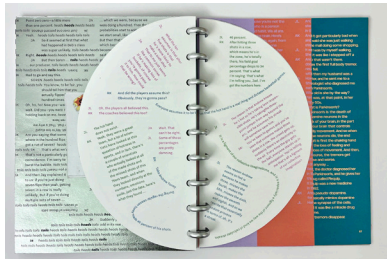
23.



24.



24.



24.



24.

28. Section 1 (Laura Buxton) and section 2 short sheet (biology)

This book was my chance to try everything wild and out there that I'd never get to do otherwise. It was about breaking legibility, creating movement, and embracing the chaos of so many elements on the page.

29. 3rd, 4th, and 5th sections stacked on top of each other

The book was really well received in critique. People seemed to enjoy how disparate it was, especially the fun short sheets and metallic paper. They also liked how interactive the book was, with features like the spinner cover, the coin to scratch off and reveal text, and the note on reading that encourages the reader to rearrange the pages and read from wherever they want. I definitely wanted the book to feel playful and humorous, and seeing people smile as they flipped through it made my day.

30. Section 3 (coin toss) with metallic paper

31. Middle spread of section 4 (basketball)

32. Spread in section 8

The main feedback I got was around pacing. I had structured the book to follow the exact order of the podcast, but since the first section was so long, I decided to shuffle some of the short sheets to space things out more. Now, the sixth section is placed in the middle of the first one.

Overall, I think people really appreciated the amount of work I put into selecting images and adding one random element to each section. Everyone mentioned how it felt random yet cohesive, which was my number one goal.

I'm incredibly proud of what I made, especially considering all the iterations it went through. It took a lot of effort to find my voice in this project. I learned a lot about creating a design system and how to build flexibility into the system so it could evolve over time. The production was a fight with the printer due to all the different papers I used. After all the chaos, I feel like future books will be easier to manage.

