



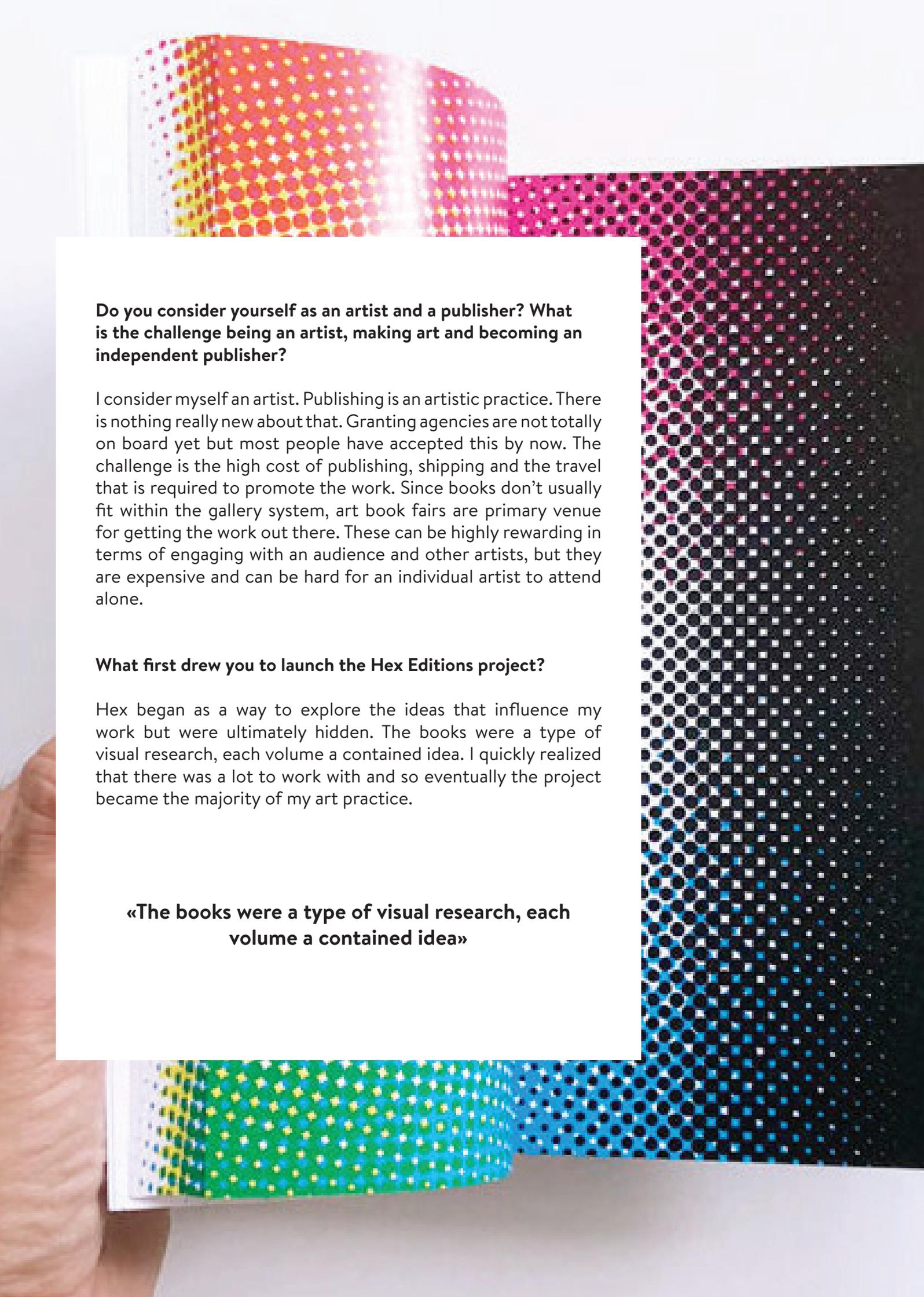
HEX EDITIONS

**«I am interested in the idea of remaking
an industry as a form of art.»**

How would you describe yourself as an artist, how would you describe Hex Editions?

Before I began Hex Editions, I had a studio based practice and I made sculpture. I began making books as an extension of that work, so I still see the books as sculptures.

The books are part of a series, but they can exist as individual works or as part of a rearrangeable collection. They contain images, drawings, graphics and the occasional text. Each book has a distinct topic that contributes to the proposition of the entire set. The subjects covered in the books varies quite a bit, but there are recurring themes of architecture, urbanism and design, along with several books that use the structure of the book itself as a subject.



Do you consider yourself as an artist and a publisher? What is the challenge being an artist, making art and becoming an independent publisher?

I consider myself an artist. Publishing is an artistic practice. There is nothing really new about that. Granting agencies are not totally on board yet but most people have accepted this by now. The challenge is the high cost of publishing, shipping and the travel that is required to promote the work. Since books don't usually fit within the gallery system, art book fairs are primary venue for getting the work out there. These can be highly rewarding in terms of engaging with an audience and other artists, but they are expensive and can be hard for an individual artist to attend alone.

What first drew you to launch the Hex Editions project?

Hex began as a way to explore the ideas that influence my work but were ultimately hidden. The books were a type of visual research, each volume a contained idea. I quickly realized that there was a lot to work with and so eventually the project became the majority of my art practice.

«The books were a type of visual research, each volume a contained idea»

Could you explain our readers your art practice, what is your process like?

Due to the practical nature of book publishing--printing, managing inventory, attending art book fairs etc.--there is a lot management involved. It also means that my practice became almost exclusively digital in terms of the art production. The advantage of this is that this makes my practice quite portable and I can have several titles in development at once, but I do miss making things with my hands. I'm currently working on some ways to bring back some studio work into the Hex books.



CMYK, Flavio Trevisan, 2017
©Flavio Trevisan, Hex Editions



What is a “multiple book”?

What are the objectives and challenges for a project like yours?

I started my publishing experiment on a whim. There was no real planning involved. I just knew that I wanted to make books, and I wanted to make a lot of them. The idea was for the individual books to become lexicons that, when read in groups, would make a larger statement. The topics to be covered were to be almost random – from hexagons to hell – so as to allow more possibilities for connection between the books. As objects, the series would form an ever-growing, re-arrangeable sculpture, one that is ultimately different for each collector.

I envisioned Hex from the beginning as a multi year project--a series of titles using a consistent format exploring divergent ideas. As new book ideas have become more ambitious, the time spent working on each title has grown (to up to three years for number 32). Since ideas for new books keep coming at a rapid pace, the real challenge is finding the time and money to produce new work.

What message do you want to convey through Hex Editions?

There are many messages in the books, both explicit and hidden, revealed in both the single titles and within the group as a whole. One of the things that I am interested in is the idea of remaking an industry as a form of art. Hex Editions can be read as conventional paperback books but belong outside of the publishing world. Making objects that appear similar to mass produced ones is just an aesthetic choice like any other. Using existing conventions for new means is exciting to me.



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Is there a particular title in the series that you could detail for our readers?

A title that I published this spring is *Assemblage #1*. It is an experiment of sorts. It's a step by step manual for the assembly of a machine without a purpose. The machine wasn't 'designed' since there was no reason for it to exist, so it's really a product of intuition, rather than from any rigorous forethought. In the second part of the book I turn it 'on' and let it execute itself, like a computer program. It's a bit like Frankenstein's monster, I gave this thing a life, to see what would happen. The whole story unfolds using only technical drawings. I'm often asked if I will ever build the actual machine. I won't, but there's no stopping someone else from trying.



Assemblage #1, Flavio Trevisan, 2018
©Flavio Trevisan, Hex Editions

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What are your thoughts concerning the complement of doing art books and exhibiting in a public space for an artist?

In most contexts, the creator or publisher of a book rarely meets their intended audience. Books are generally consumed as a solitary activity. Having presented my books at several art book fairs over the years, I've been able to observe my audience, often without them knowing that I was the artist. Because of this, I get an unfiltered reading of people's reactions, good or bad. This doesn't affect how I make new books, but it does give me some insight on how people interact with my work. The other result is that I've had countless fascinating conversations with people.

Can you say a word on your background: Experiences, Education?

My education was in architecture not art, so this informs my work quite a bit. I also design exhibitions in an art museum, so I am always thinking about ways of presenting information, stories and ideas through a primarily visual medium, which is not unlike publishing.

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**«I consider myself an artist.
Publishing is an artistic practice.»**



What are your expectations concerning Toronto Art Book Fair?

I've met some great people at past fairs, so I always look forward to making new connections. Seeing so much great work in one place is inspiring too. I always have a long list of ideas to explore at the end of a fair.

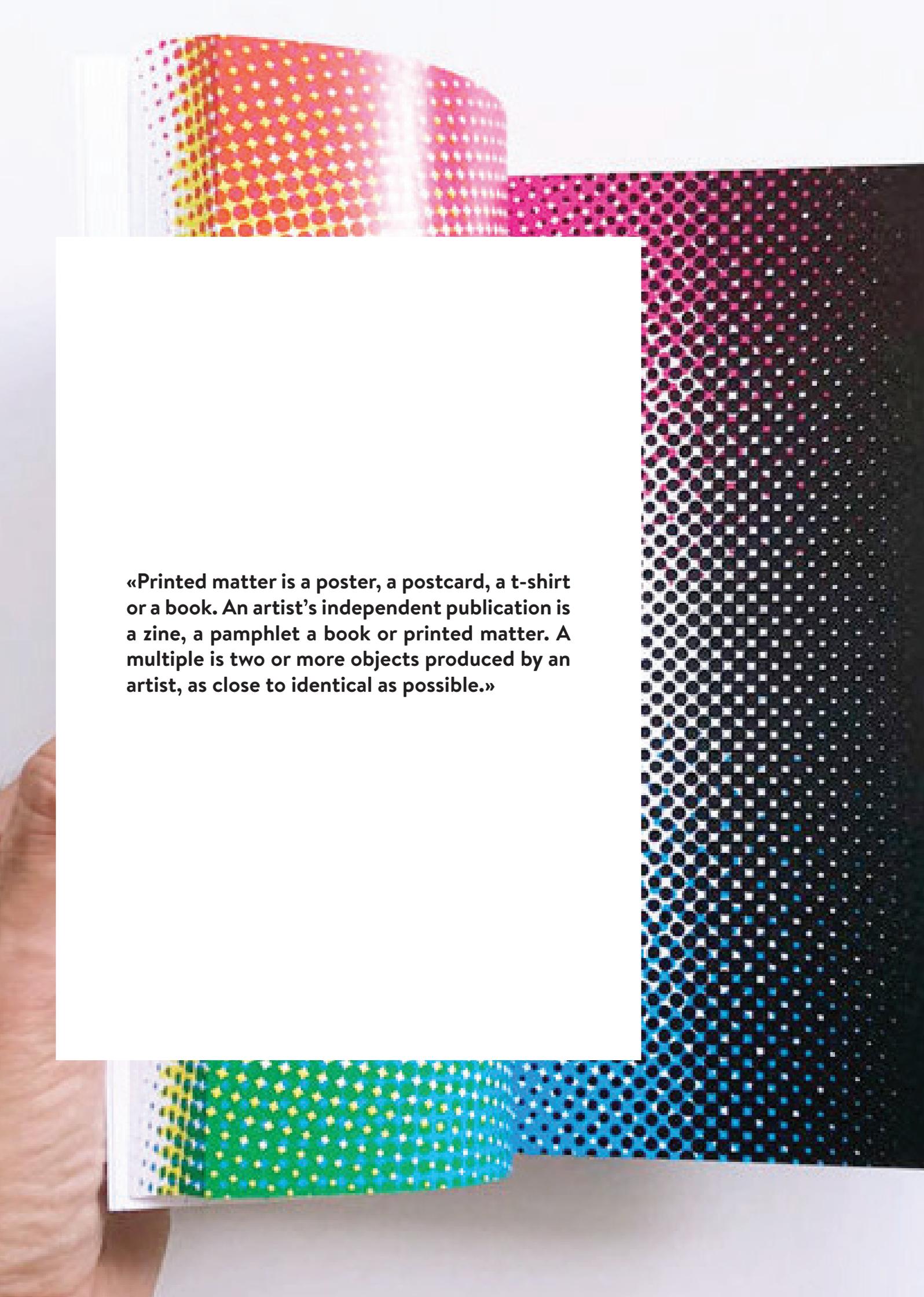
What is your own definition of "printed matter"? Artist's independent publication? Multiples?

Printed matter is a poster, a postcard, a t-shirt or a book. An artist's independent publication is a zine, a pamphlet a book or printed matter. A multiple is two or more objects produced by an artist, as close to identical as possible.

How would you describe the current art publishing community in Toronto? Worldwide?

Toronto has a long history of artists involved with publishing and it is great to be part of the current generation of artists contributing to this history. With the fairs that have sprung up over the last few years, there is now a way for this group of artists to become a stronger community. The audience still seems to be in its infancy however. Hopefully that's growing.

Internationally there is a growing community of producers and consumers for artists' publications. I love going to *Printed Matter* in New York, it is ground zero for artists' books, I always find so many great things there.



«Printed matter is a poster, a postcard, a t-shirt or a book. An artist's independent publication is a zine, a pamphlet a book or printed matter. A multiple is two or more objects produced by an artist, as close to identical as possible.»



What are your thoughts on TOABF 2018 theme of political activism and resistance? Can the artist book be used as a political medium to critique and subvert the established practice of traditional institutions today? If so, how?

I'm generally weary of themes applied to events because while they can serve to highlight movements or ideas, they can also be exclusionary, especially to something as big and varied as an art community. That said, I believe that the artist book is absolutely a political medium. Books are primarily a vector for transmitting ideas and the portable nature of most books means that they can be sent anywhere. They also have a tendency to last quite a long time so even if they are originally overlooked, they still hold their power, indefinitely.

According to you, what is the future for the independent artistic print culture?

There is a long future ahead for this type of culture. It seems to be at a moment of expansion right now, with book fairs popping up everywhere. I would like to see new types of venues or libraries that specialize in collecting this work develop, because so much of this material is rare. Ultimately though, artists' books and multiples are a very accessible form of art, so it will always have an audience. And of course there is so much great work being made.

A hand is holding a white rectangular card in the center of the frame. The background consists of several sheets of paper with vibrant, colorful halftone dot patterns. The top-left sheet has a red and yellow pattern, the top-right sheet has a pink and black pattern, and the bottom-left sheet has a green and blue pattern. The bottom-right area is a solid black background with a white halftone dot pattern. The lighting is bright, creating a clean, modern aesthetic.

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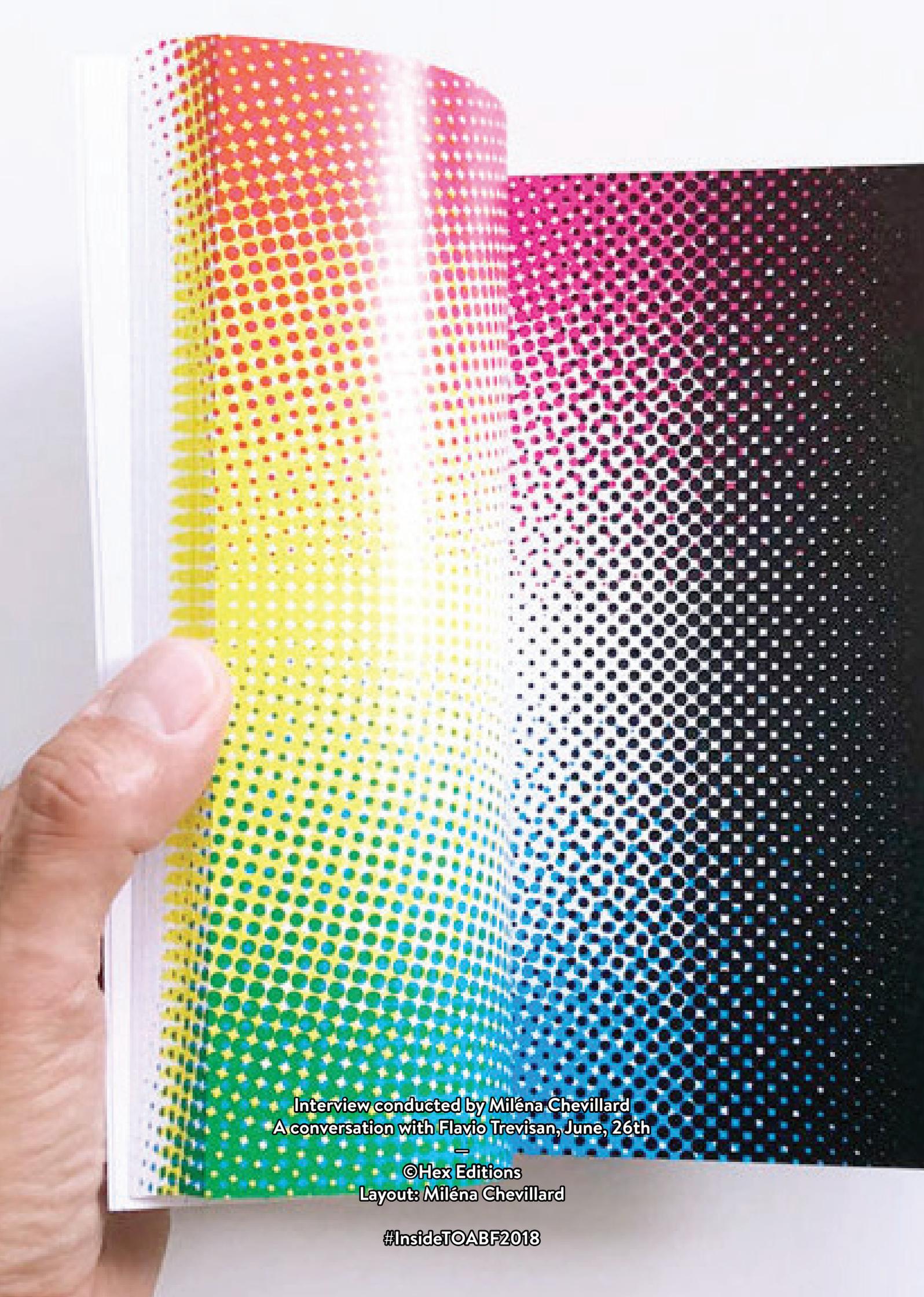
Editions

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Interview conducted by Miléna Chevillard
A conversation with Flavio Trevisan, June, 26th

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Layout: Miléna Chevillard

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